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2012
A SEASON OF DRAMA

ISSUE 22 DECEMBER 2012

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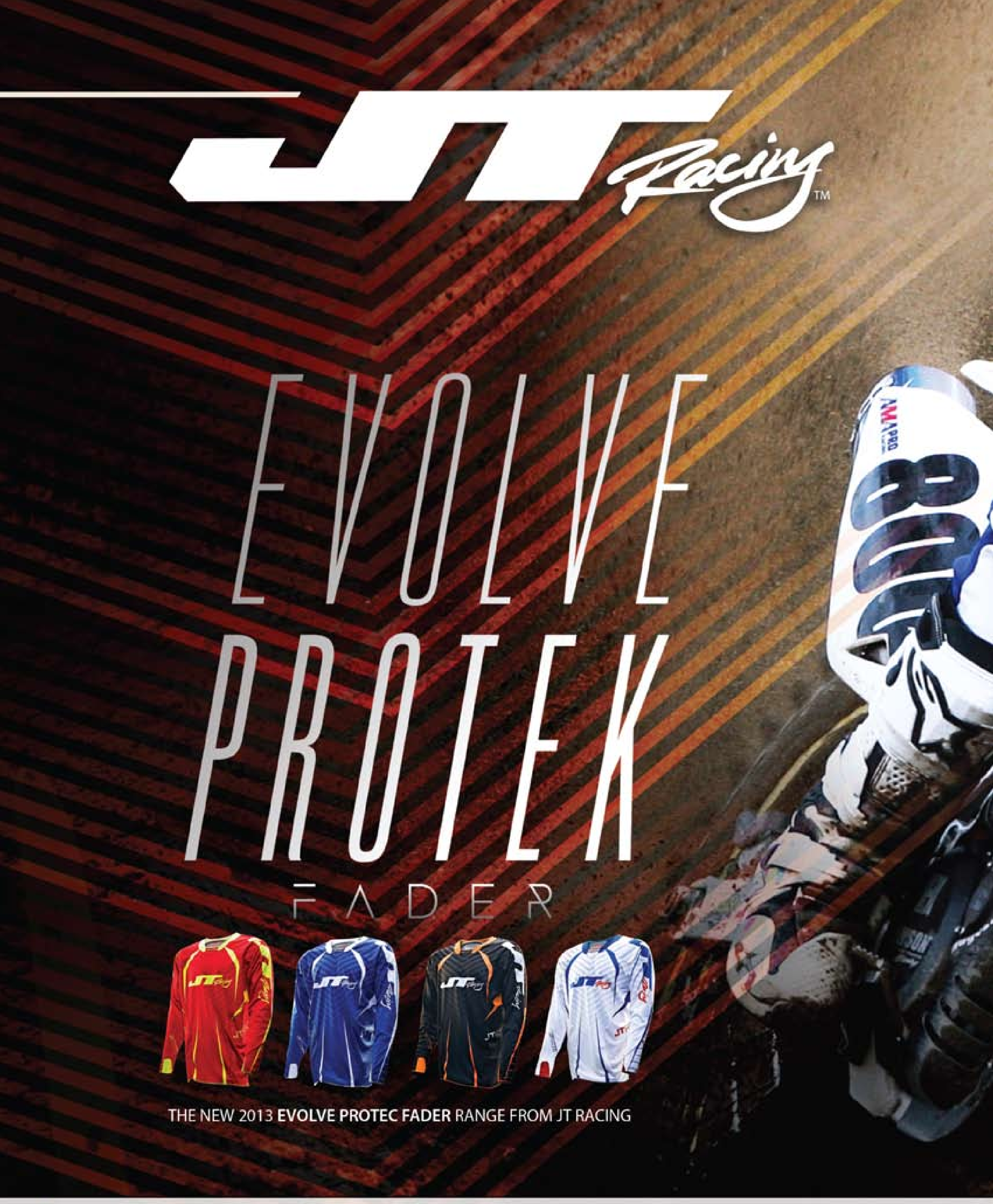
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CONTENTS

FEATURES

26 A LOOK AT KEVIN STRIJBOS
30 PHOTOGRAPHY IN MOTOCROSS
48 SEVLIEVO AND ITS BEAUTY
52 MAX NAGL TALKS
56 **BERCY SUPERCROSS**
64 2012 A SEASON OF DRAMA
98 STEVE WHITELOCK INTERVIEW

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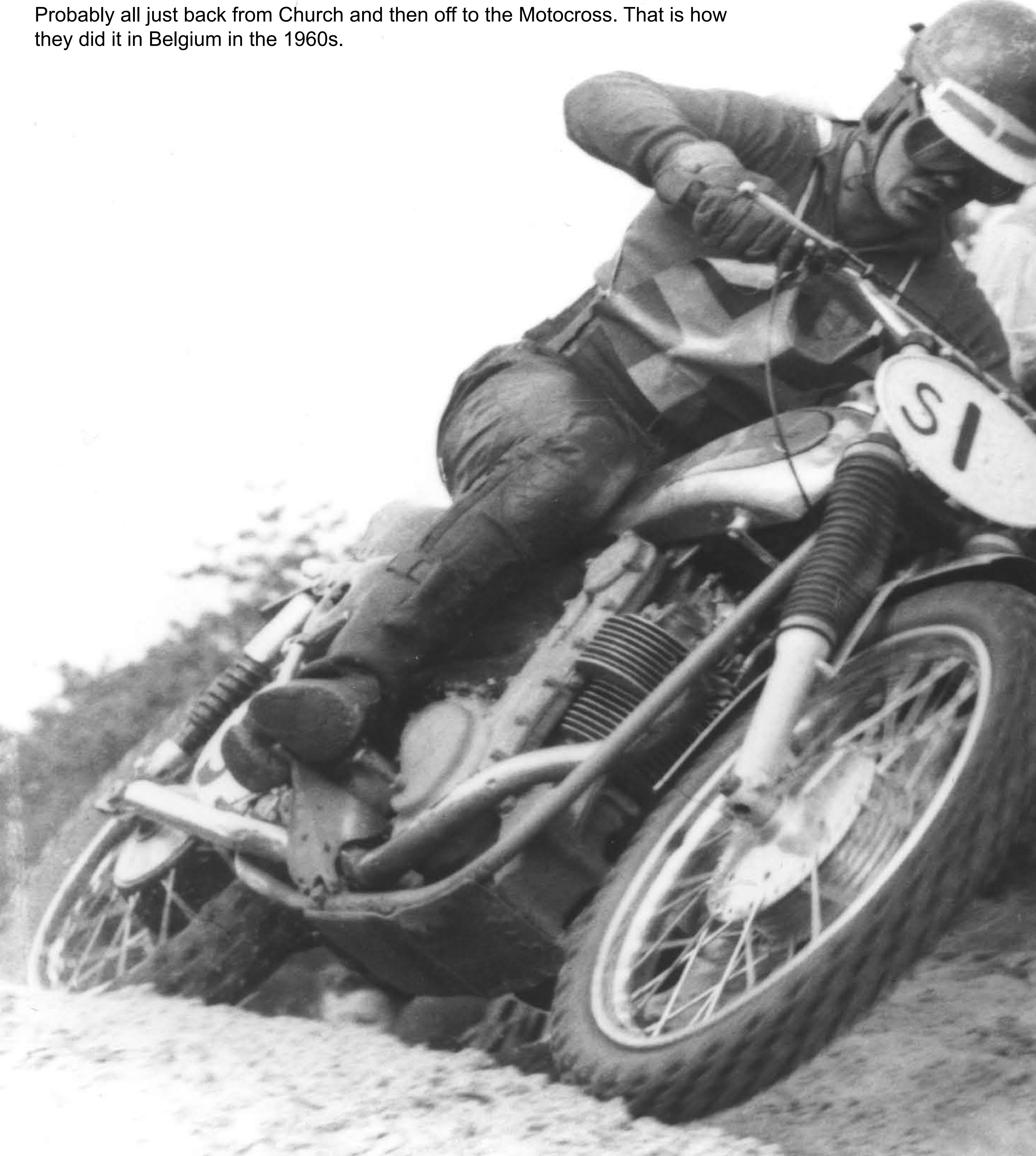
2012 WORLD CHAMPION MX1
CAIROLI
KOPRON

FRIENDS. Antonio Cairoli and Ken Roczen are good friends and their battle in Teutchenthal, Germany showed that. No banging bars, just getting on with the job. Here the two congratulate eachother after their race. A week later these two riders showed the World just how fast the Europeans are in the deep sand of Lommel. Ray Archer image

OLD SCHOOL

I have run this photo before on MXlarge, but it really is an amazing image. Bill Nilsson 1957 and 1960 World 500cc Champion racing in the sand in Belgium. Everything about this image is amazing, from the old school riding gear, the Swedish breast-plate, the old number one with an S for Swedenn included, the bike, even the crowd in their suits. Probably all just back from Church and then off to the Motocross. That is how they did it in Belgium in the 1960s.



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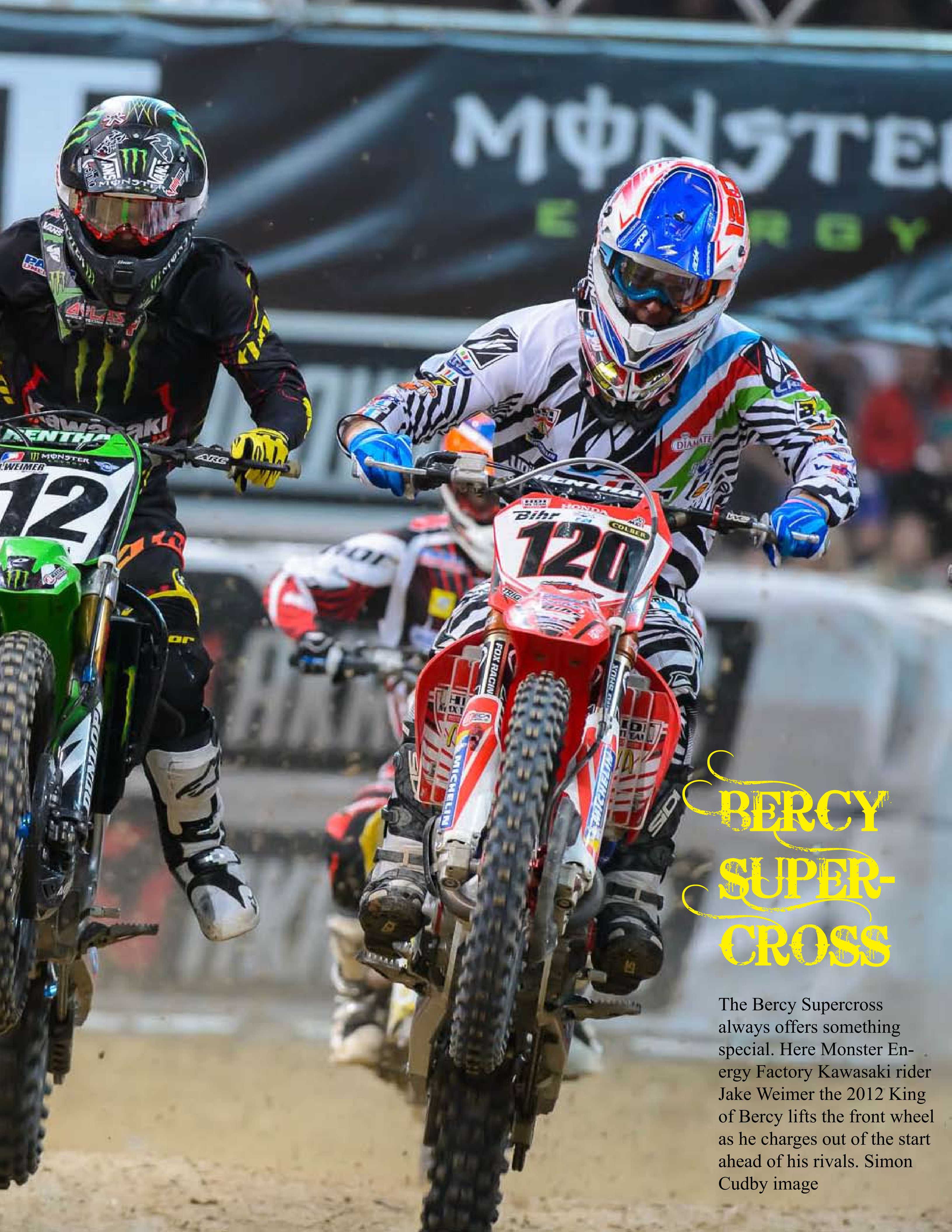

BERCY SUPER-CROSS

The Bercy Supercross always offers something special. Here Monster Energy Factory Kawasaki rider Jake Weimer the 2012 King of Bercy lifts the front wheel as he charges out of the start ahead of his rivals. Simon Cudby image

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THE EVERTS LEGEND

2006 and the final season of the great Stefan Everts. This shot was taken at the Grand Prix of Portugal, and Everts was at the start of his sensational run to that nearly perfect season. He went 1-1 and his biggest rival for the MX1 Championship Sebastien Tortelli was on the way to the hospital with a broken leg. Tortelli would retire from the sport after this day and Everts would retire a couple of months later. Geoff Meyer image

24
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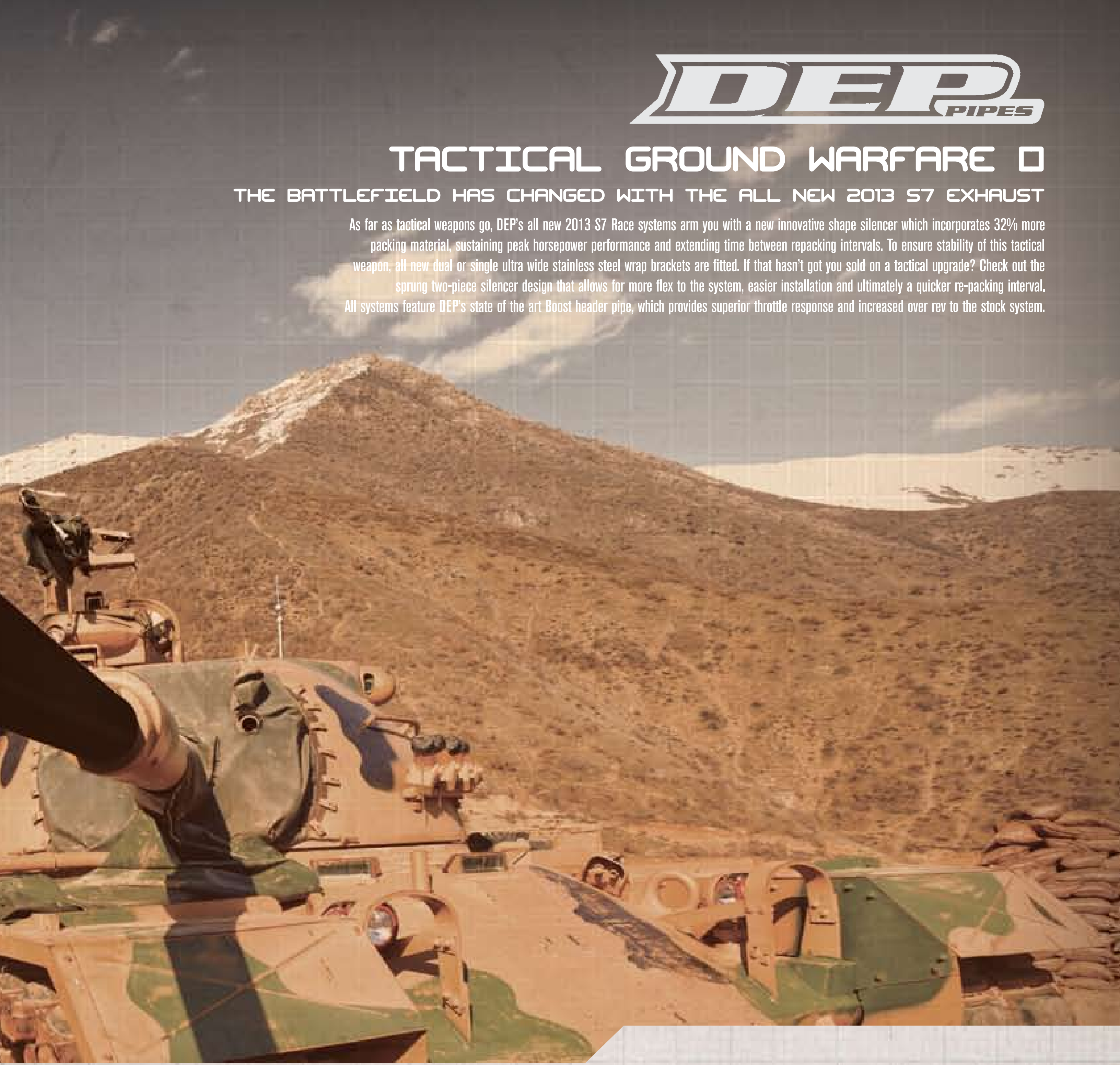

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KEVIN STRIJBOS IS THE COMEBACK COMPLETE?

STORY BY TINUS NEL IMAGES BY RAY ARCHER

It is a story that has smatterings of the parable of the Prodigal Son and a Hollywood come-back-from-the cold script. Way back in 2002, 125cc European Champions Kevin Strijbos was given a dream opportunity to pilot the factory 250cc Suzuki alongside Mickael Pichon at the Belgian GP held at Genk. He grasped the opportunity with both teenage hands and secured a permanent berth in the factory set-up. It was a match made in heaven.

The Belgian-based squad looked after its native son, and the results continued to pile up. GP race – and overall victories came, and but for years where injury intervened, the young man was firmly ensconced in the upper half of the top 10 at year end. Two years in succession there was only one man between him and the world title at the end of the season.

In 2006, Stefan Everts took the title by the proverbial country mile at a canter, but in 2007, it was arguably only Strijbos' enforced lay-off from the Bulgarian GP that tilted the overall honours in favour of teammate Steve Ramon.

No honeymoon lasts forever, though, and when Strijbos and Suzuki could not agree terms for the 2008 season, there was a parting of the ways. The quiet, unassuming Belgian was about to embark on a

22

roller-coaster ride of ups and downs, chiefly the latter. Injury woes, team- and contractual problems, and sheer bad luck seemed to gather in conspiracy against him.

Professional sport takes place in an unforgiving arena, and it is tough to hold onto a top contract when misfortune has dumped you down the ladder and there is a steady stream of emerging talent knocking on the door. This meant that Strijbos had to forego official factory backing for a few years.

Fortunately, he could still count on a faithful group of backers who kept the faith and ensured that he remained on the world championship circuit. This is important, for if you are not there to be seen, your chances of a notable deal dwindle by the minute.

True quality has a habit of drifting to the top, though, and in 2012, Strijbos simply oozed determination. He began building a solid world championship campaign, whilst also carving away at a British Championship title for his UK-Based team. He never missed a beat, keeping the points counter clicking with every single race.

The momentum was good, which made for a steady base, and one by one, the race- and overall podiums came, lifting the campaign to tree top level and making it visible to the media and, most importantly, teams. Here was a rider, clearly with the ability to mix it at the top, who had matured and rediscovered his muse.

It was no surprises that the approaches came when the musical chairs for 2013 team slots started. There were a good few approaches, but in his heart of hearts, Strijbos still favours Suzuki above all. It did help matters along, of course, that the Suzuki offer that floated through the letterbox came from the official Suzuki squad. This was the one he had been waiting for, the one that he had always hoped would come.

It didn't take long before the deal was inked. Now, a good few years along the road since their last collaboration, Kevin Strijbos and the factory Suzuki race team will again be in the same corner for a full assault on the 2013 motocross MX1 world title.

Things had come full circle. Time will tell if the circle is perfectly round. If it depended on the determination of team and rider alike, you can bet your bottom dollar that it will be.

STRIJBOS
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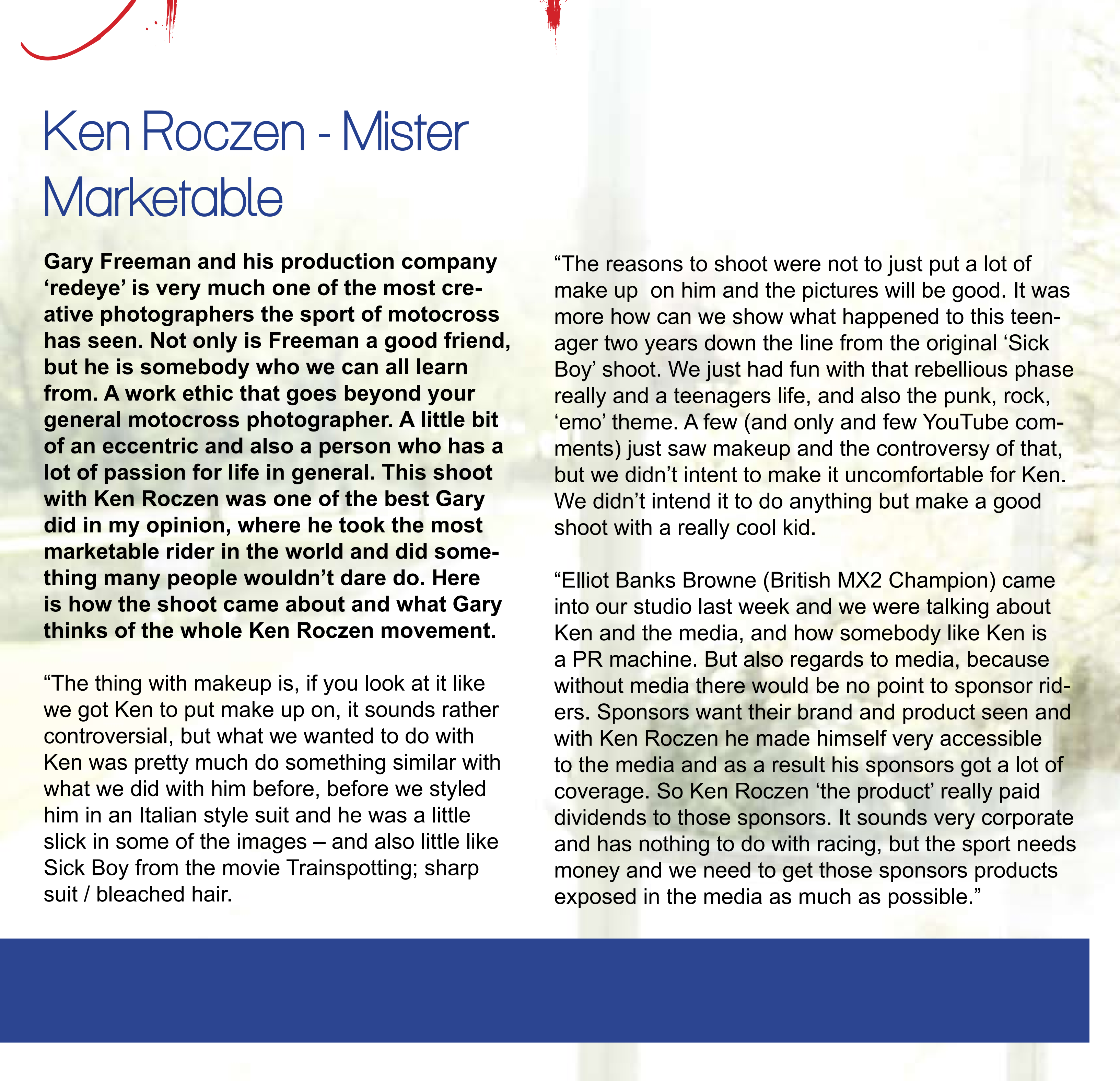
PHOTOGRAPHY IN MOTOCROSS

Ken Roczen - Mister Marketable



Gary Freeman and his production company ‘redeye’ is very much one of the most creative photographers the sport of motocross has seen. Not only is Freeman a good friend, but he is somebody who we can all learn from. A work ethic that goes beyond your general motocross photographer. A little bit of an eccentric and also a person who has a lot of passion for life in general. This shoot with Ken Roczen was one of the best Gary did in my opinion, where he took the most marketable rider in the world and did something many people wouldn’t dare do. Here is how the shoot came about and what Gary thinks of the whole Ken Roczen movement.

“The thing with makeup is, if you look at it like we got Ken to put make up on, it sounds rather controversial, but what we wanted to do with Ken was pretty much do something similar with what we did with him before, before we styled him in an Italian style suit and he was a little slick in some of the images – and also little like Sick Boy from the movie Trainspotting; sharp suit / bleached hair.

“The reasons to shoot were not to just put a lot of make up on him and the pictures will be good. It was more how can we show what happened to this teenager two years down the line from the original ‘Sick Boy’ shoot. We just had fun with that rebellious phase really and a teenagers life, and also the punk, rock, ‘emo’ theme. A few (and only and few YouTube comments) just saw makeup and the controversy of that, but we didn’t intent to make it uncomfortable for Ken. We didn’t intend it to do anything but make a good shoot with a really cool kid.

“Elliot Banks Browne (British MX2 Champion) came into our studio last week and we were talking about Ken and the media, and how somebody like Ken is a PR machine. But also regards to media, because without media there would be no point to sponsor riders. Sponsors want their brand and product seen and with Ken Roczen he made himself very accessible to the media and as a result his sponsors got a lot of coverage. So Ken Roczen ‘the product’ really paid dividends to those sponsors. It sounds very corporate and has nothing to do with racing, but the sport needs money and we need to get those sponsors products exposed in the media as much as possible.”

Paul Malin - Test Riding Genius

**Paul Malin and Gary Freeman have been working together for probably 20 years so they know each other well and th
ethic is always professional and fine-tuned. Malin the former Grand Prix and Motocross des Nations winner, a man
ished second in the 1996 World 125cc Championship now works for Youthstream in their commentary for televisio
man a very creative and driven personality, a fitness freak and somebody who loves the sport of motocross as much
one. We decided to run this image shot by Freeman as Malin shoots out of a corner, arms up and standing on t**

“This photo was at a part of the track I had shot to death with the other riders. This was a UK press launch for the 2013 RMZ450. Paul is pre
he knew that corner was busy with a lot of riders going around and I’m sure he had one eye on the turn, but I think he was taking a look wh
in the paddock having a cup of tea and a sandwich. As soon as I was done with the others, he was on the bike and I was shooting him in
corner. We had something like 10 minutes with just him, more or less exclusively. Good on him for doing that. It was one of the best shots fro

“I’ve worked with Paul for so many years now, but the great thing about him is, he’ll go away and find a special place on the track, which is very
really. A lot of the time a rider will come to you and ask what you want to shoot next; which is of course a very normal question. But with Paul he of
with some good ideas, and says ‘come over, I want to show you something really cool’. Paul thinks about everything - even the background and su

“I think Paul is (and I mean this in a complementary way), a ‘fact geek’. He sucks all the facts in and he can reel stuff off like it’s easy. S
we talk about bikes and the conversation dries up and doesn’t go any further, but then I read what he has written about the bike he rode
ize how clever he is in how a bike works. He finds a lot of things most people wouldn’t find out - things I didn’t even know he knew. In his
maybe he was a good development rider. There are some riders who can tell a mechanic what the problem is and other riders who can’t
what they want changed. Paul has that ability to tell people what needs to be done, and that helps make him a very good test and p

heir work who fin- on. Free- n as any- the pegs.

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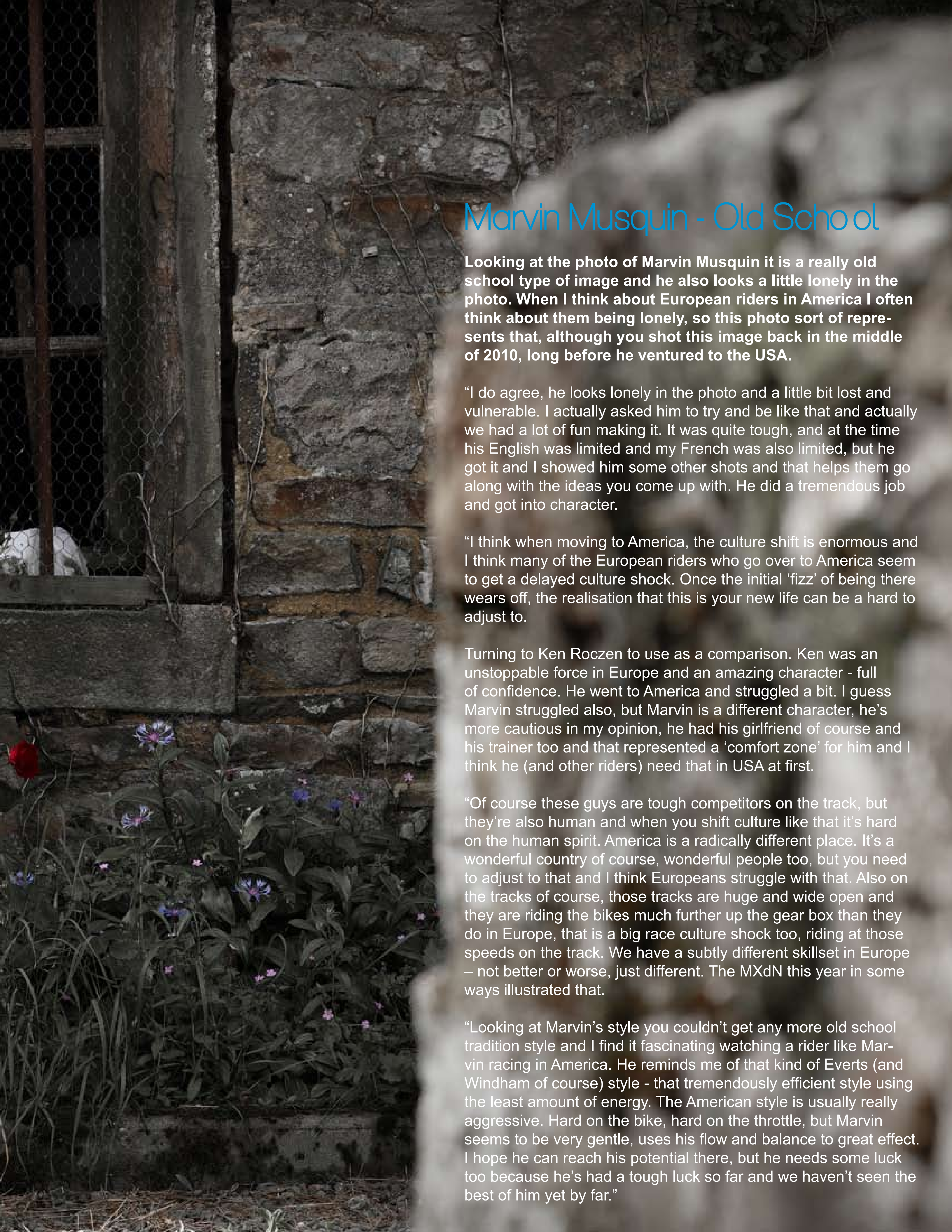

Marvin Musquin - Old School

Looking at the photo of Marvin Musquin it is a really old school type of image and he also looks a little lonely in the photo. When I think about European riders in America I often think about them being lonely, so this photo sort of represents that, although you shot this image back in the middle of 2010, long before he ventured to the USA.

“I do agree, he looks lonely in the photo and a little bit lost and vulnerable. I actually asked him to try and be like that and actually we had a lot of fun making it. It was quite tough, and at the time his English was limited and my French was also limited, but he got it and I showed him some other shots and that helps them go along with the ideas you come up with. He did a tremendous job and got into character.

“I think when moving to America, the culture shift is enormous and I think many of the European riders who go over to America seem to get a delayed culture shock. Once the initial ‘fizz’ of being there wears off, the realisation that this is your new life can be a hard to adjust to.

Turning to Ken Roczen to use as a comparison. Ken was an unstoppable force in Europe and an amazing character - full of confidence. He went to America and struggled a bit. I guess Marvin struggled also, but Marvin is a different character, he’s more cautious in my opinion, he had his girlfriend of course and his trainer too and that represented a ‘comfort zone’ for him and I think he (and other riders) need that in USA at first.

“Of course these guys are tough competitors on the track, but they’re also human and when you shift culture like that it’s hard on the human spirit. America is a radically different place. It’s a wonderful country of course, wonderful people too, but you need to adjust to that and I think Europeans struggle with that. Also on the tracks of course, those tracks are huge and wide open and they are riding the bikes much further up the gear box than they do in Europe, that is a big race culture shock too, riding at those speeds on the track. We have a subtly different skillset in Europe – not better or worse, just different. The MXdN this year in some ways illustrated that.

“Looking at Marvin’s style you couldn’t get any more old school tradition style and I find it fascinating watching a rider like Marvin racing in America. He reminds me of that kind of Everts (and Windham of course) style - that tremendously efficient style using the least amount of energy. The American style is usually really aggressive. Hard on the bike, hard on the throttle, but Marvin seems to be very gentle, uses his flow and balance to great effect. I hope he can reach his potential there, but he needs some luck too because he’s had a tough luck so far and we haven’t seen the best of him yet by far.”

Stefan Everts - The Warmth of a Family

When thinking about Stefan Everts it is very easy to think about his racing career, but what I learn most about Stefan in my time with him was what a great family man he is. Quality time with his family seemed very important to him, and the fact that Stefan himself came from a split family (his parents divorced when he was a teenager) he didn't want that for his family. Here is a really cool image from Gary Freeman when he was invited into the Everts family home.

"It is interesting really, together with Stefan we'd driven past the field that he'd bought a few times and over time I also saw the house in various stages of construction. Stefan is really proud of the house and he's basically put his heart and soul into it - Kelly too. Now the house is finished Stefan can tell you so many different things about it, such as where the slates on the roof came from and the bricks he used and the electronic car lift that goes down to the cellar and the heating system he uses, the electronic controller that controls everything in the house, also his play room and also the cellar, which is probably the most interesting for most people, because that's where a lot of his memorabilia from his racing days lives. I've said this before but it's amazing when Stefan shows guests all his past racing stuff. It's like he can't believe what he achieved himself! He shows things to people like it's a shrine to another racer – but they're all his achievements. He's very modest these days and looks away like an embarrassed boy when comments get too complimentary.

His house isn't too extravagant. It could be much bigger, but I guess he built it as a family home and not a place to have 12 people over to stay. It isn't a place like that. In some respects it is rather modest, but great attention to detail. The driveway for example - he has these wonderful reclaimed stones in the driveway. It is the kind of place you could really chill out. Nice big couches and a fireplace. He is very proud of it and he should be.

"With age, Stefan developed into the ultimate professional and I think he understood the importance of the media and he made himself available. But he wouldn't just make himself available; he'd give you a whole day, no problem and even more if you needed it. I think that's important. We (the media) have a job to do and we also need the time to make something worthwhile and I think Everts knew to give a day for such a shoot was worth it to his sponsors. That's important to remember. Sure, riders are sponsored because of their race results, but they're also sponsored for media exposure in general I think. That media exposure can come in other ways, not just from winning a race, or being a champion. It can also come from just being available.

"We did this shoot at his house and there was actually a moment that I was in his house on my own, he needed to pick Liam up and he had helped me for a while, but then I was just shooting stuff in his house on my own. I guess we had developed a bit of trust over the years and I do miss working with him. He's a cool guy on the outside, but likes to laugh and giggle like the rest of us and that's what makes a photoshoot fun. I must mention other riders too, like Joel Smets, and many of the other great big names from just a few years ago, tremendous characters and all made themselves available and had fun in the process.

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Ken De Dycker - Char

Ken De Dycker is a really normal person. N be competitive on a regular basis, but with his KTM machine.

“Ken is a really good guy. A quiet guy and kee new bike on the Thursday before the race. Th shoot Ken was still very unfamiliar with everyt pened so quickly he didn’t know where to repo I could tell he was also unfamiliar with the bike I think he was still in shock really about what h factory opportunity came along.

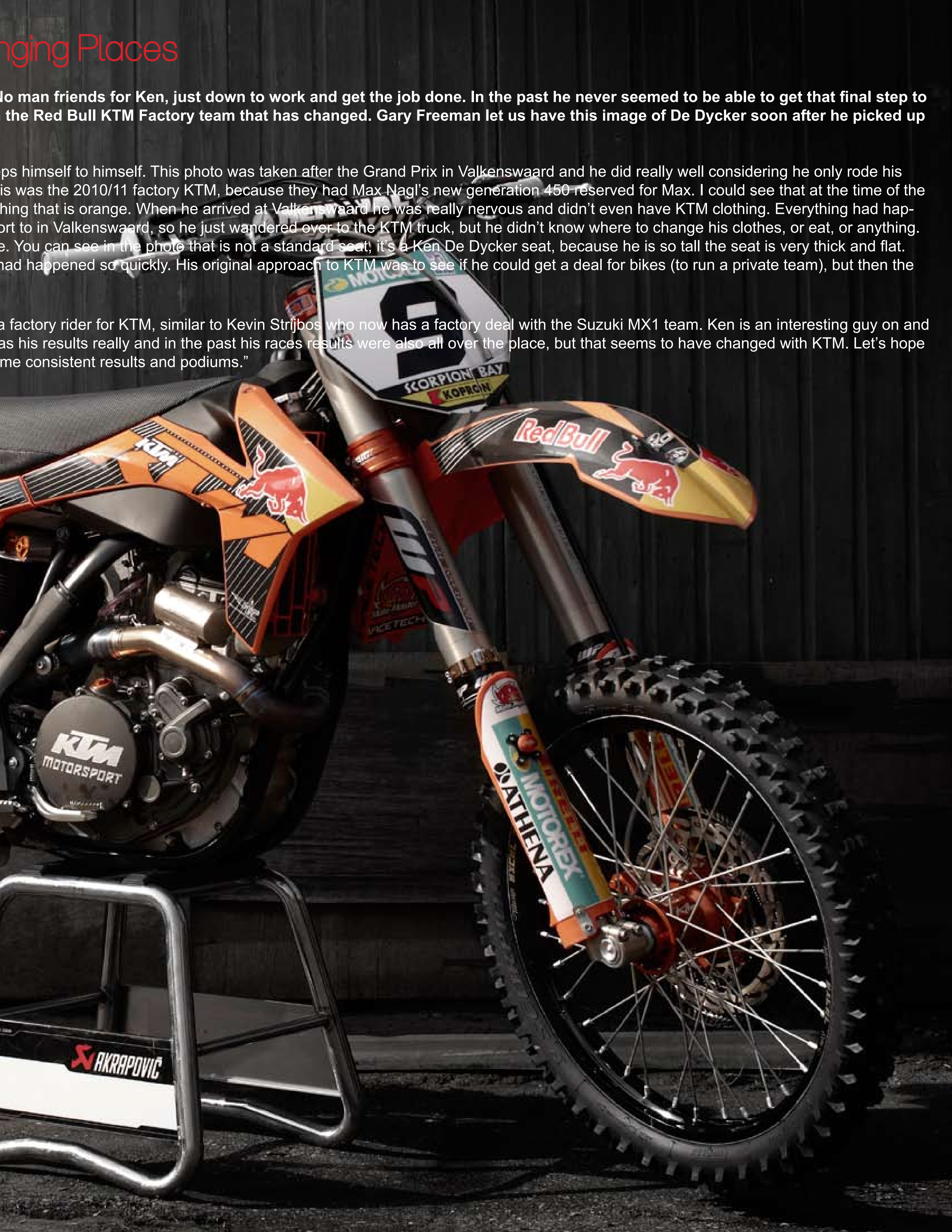
“An incredible turn around for Ken. He’s now a off the track. His race lines are as interesting a a smooth 2013 season will see him deliver so

nging Places

lo man friends for Ken, just down to work and get the job done. In the past he never seemed to be able to get that final step to
the Red Bull KTM Factory team that has changed. Gary Freeman let us have this image of De Dycker soon after he picked up

eps himself to himself. This photo was taken after the Grand Prix in Valkenswaard and he did really well considering he only rode his
is was the 2010/11 factory KTM, because they had Max Nagl’s new generation 450 reserved for Max. I could see that at the time of the
hing that is orange. When he arrived at Valkenswaard he was really nervous and didn’t even have KTM clothing. Everything had hap-
ort to in Valkenswaard, so he just wandered over to the KTM truck, but he didn’t know where to change his clothes, or eat, or anything.
e. You can see in the photo that is not a standard seat, it’s a Ken De Dycker seat, because he is so tall the seat is very thick and flat.
had happened so quickly. His original approach to KTM was to see if he could get a deal for bikes (to run a private team), but then the

a factory rider for KTM, similar to Kevin Strijbos who now has a factory deal with the Suzuki MX1 team. Ken is an interesting guy on and
as his results really and in the past his races results were also all over the place, but that seems to have changed with KTM. Let’s hope
me consistent results and podiums.”



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HERLINGS COULD GO 36-0 IN 2012

BY GEOFF MEYER IMAGE RAY ARCHER

There is always something special about a rider who is looking for challenges in everything he does and The Flying Dutchman Jeffrey Herlings is very much that type of rider.

During the 2012 FIM World Motocross Championship Herlings had more than his ups and downs, from his on track clashes with British riders Tommy Searle and Mel Pocock to his on and off track confrontations with Switzerland's Arnaud Tonus.

Love him or hate him Herlings is a brilliant rider and one who is always looking to do something special, be it lap the complete field in the sand of Lierop, or take the overall victory at the Motocross of Nations in Lommel.
Well coming into the 2013 season Herlings wants to go 36 wins from 36 starts. It is a huge challenge and going by talent he could do it, but in all motorsports engine problems, a crash or injury can prevent what everyone expects to happen.

No rider in the history of the sport has gone undefeated in a Grand Prix season, not even Stefan Everts who was beaten once in the 2006 GP season by New Zealand's Josh Coppins in the Grand Prix of Ireland.

Herlings deserves a lot of respect as a racer, for his passion for the sport and for his attitude to giving it everything he has, as he did in the Grand Prix of Great Britain this year when going 2-2 against home favourite Searle.

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HAT TRICK FOR TONY CAIROLI!

TRICAIROLI

Red Bull KTM's Italian factory rider Tony Cairoli takes his third consecutive MX1 World Championship title for KTM before the end of the season. The six-times Motocross Champion has won around half of all the races on his KTM 350 SX-F and has taken more than 80 percent of the available points – GRANDE TONY!

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TINUS NEL COLUMN A CIRCUIT OF BEAUTY

It beckoned us. I was sure of that. The race truck was parked up, the tent pitched, and we were walking the spectacular track of Sevlievo. Those who have been there, will tell you – the hills are fierce, noticeably so when you are riding with a bike, but most definitely so when your locomotive power comes from aching legs.

The riders, of course, were taking it all in their stride, bounding and skipping like rabbits, but the team manager, carrying a disadvantage measured in several decades coupled to a good few kilograms of extra blubber, was having a more laborious time of it. When we crested the hill, the breaths were panting, and everyone had a stop and have a make-believe look back over the portion of track we had just traversed, just to get the actual oxygen intake and the bodily requirements in synch again.

We continued walking, rounding a left-hander, taking care to miss the mud on the outside of the corner. And then it called us. It had been completely wind-still all morning, but just as we got to the corner, a small breeze sprang up, and a bright, flexible object started flap flapping just outside the confines of the track, as if calling us over. Like a lizard stuck in the mud, it was straining to get free. One of the riders trotted over with ostrich-like giant steps to miss the worst of the mud, and pulled it out.

We were all pleased and amazed in equal measure. A quick wipe of the object revealed the unmistakeable colours of our own team. A mudguard sticker, to be more precise. But not the current one. It was the one from the previous year.

It was almost unfathomable. More than a year before, this sticker had blown off one of our bikes, fluttered in the wind, and found repose at the side of a track. After all this time, it had not blown away, was not disturbed, did not find its way into the hands of an eager fan. It was lying there patiently, waiting for us to walk by before raising itself from its slumbers. It was a happy reunion, sort of like getting a souvenir from ourselves.

It was an entirely appropriate place for this too. I remember passing very close to this spot a year before, in pelting, icy rain. A local spectator, seemingly rendered immune to cold and discomfort by the white liquid of which half a mouthful still remained in the bottle next to him, was lying in a freezing puddle, trying desperately to get up. We gave him a hand up, and instead of thanking us, he asked immediately if we had any caps or stickers to give him. Our brightly-coloured team clothing was a dead give-away that we were creatures from the “other side”, and he was not going to let an opportunity pass to scalp something. Mind you, with the way he was seeing the world at that stage, the single sticker we gave him must have looked like about five.

After completing our track walk, we made our way back to the paddock. The riders were chirping with the kind of excitement you’d expect of teenagers that have made an unusual discovery. I was more quietly contemplative. As the years click past, one becomes more philosophical. When you visit a far-off place, you sometimes wonder whether you will ever get to see it again. Each wonderful experience is all the more precious, every moment is drunk in with greater intensity, for you realize that the blur of wonderful experiences we have over the course of a lifetime are finite. It is easy to take them for granted when you are younger, but as the years roll on, one tends to appreciate the experiences with which you paint your life’s canvas all the more.

Back in the paddock, the sticker got hosed down and found pride of place on the wall in the workshop section of the truck. There was much ribbing going on – the mechanics must not have applied the sticker properly, one said. No, said one of the riders, he was going so fast that the sheer wind pressure simply ripped the sticker off the bike. It was, all in all, an amazing and happy coincidence, and the story was told and retold around the paddock and further afield. It even made its way into our race report for the weekend.

I’ve often thought that involvement in motocross racing brings with it a certain kind of madness. After all, a philosopher once said that there is a pleasure in being mad which none but madmen know. We get so deeply ensconced in our activities that we don’t notice it ourselves. Riders are so at one with their bikes that they begin to ascribe human characteristics to their mounts. It won’t be surprising to see them hug their bikes at quiet moments when no one is watching.

Very similarly, I’ve often thought about how about other inanimate objects experience the racing. Think of a track, for instance. During a race weekend, it is a hive of activity, and the happy sounds of bikes and people fill the air. I imagine it to be like an open day at the SPCA where the lonely dogs and cats enjoy a surfeit of attention. Then, with the racing done, the people leave in droves, and the trucks pull out of the paddock one by one. A few hours later, the track is quiet again, lonesome, forlorn. A sad quiet hangs in the air.

The previous year, I wrote an article about the first European championship race at Sevlievo. I spoke in glowing terms of the track itself, the facilities, the organization, and everything surrounding it. This, at least in part, brought some additional attention to the venue, and sure enough, it was awarded a world championship round.

I may be wrong, but it may be because it wanted to reciprocate and ensure our loyalty and regular return that the track of Sevlievo held this special treat for us. It took one of our memories, buried it safely in its belly, and yielded it up at precisely at the right moment, just as we were walking past. It was like it was talking to us. I may be wrong, but I don’t think so.

1
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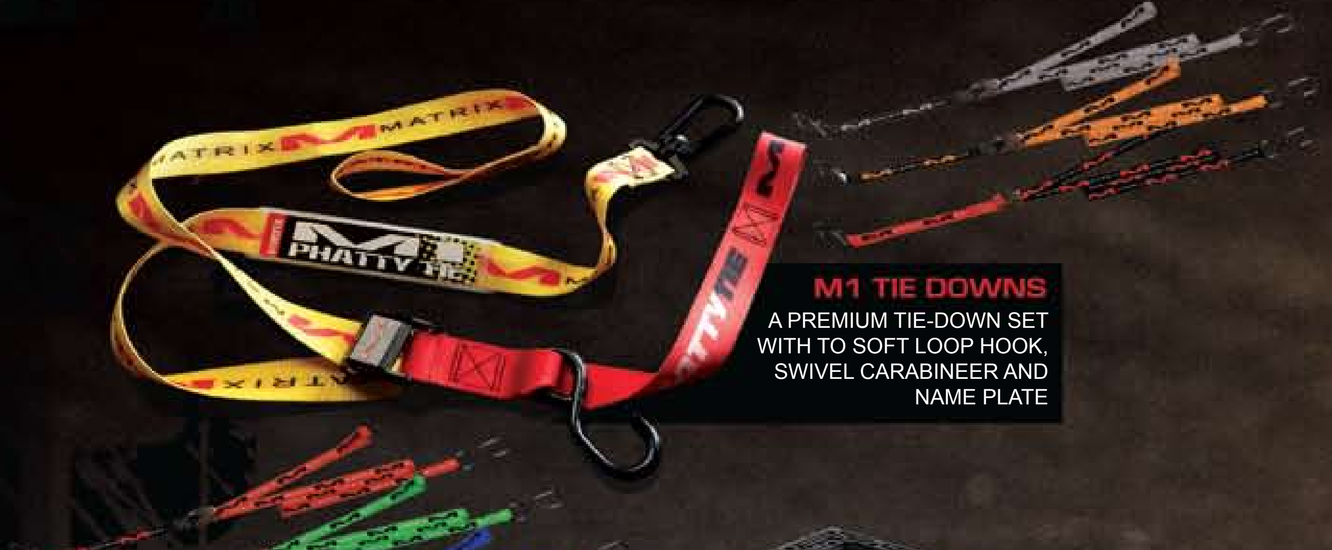
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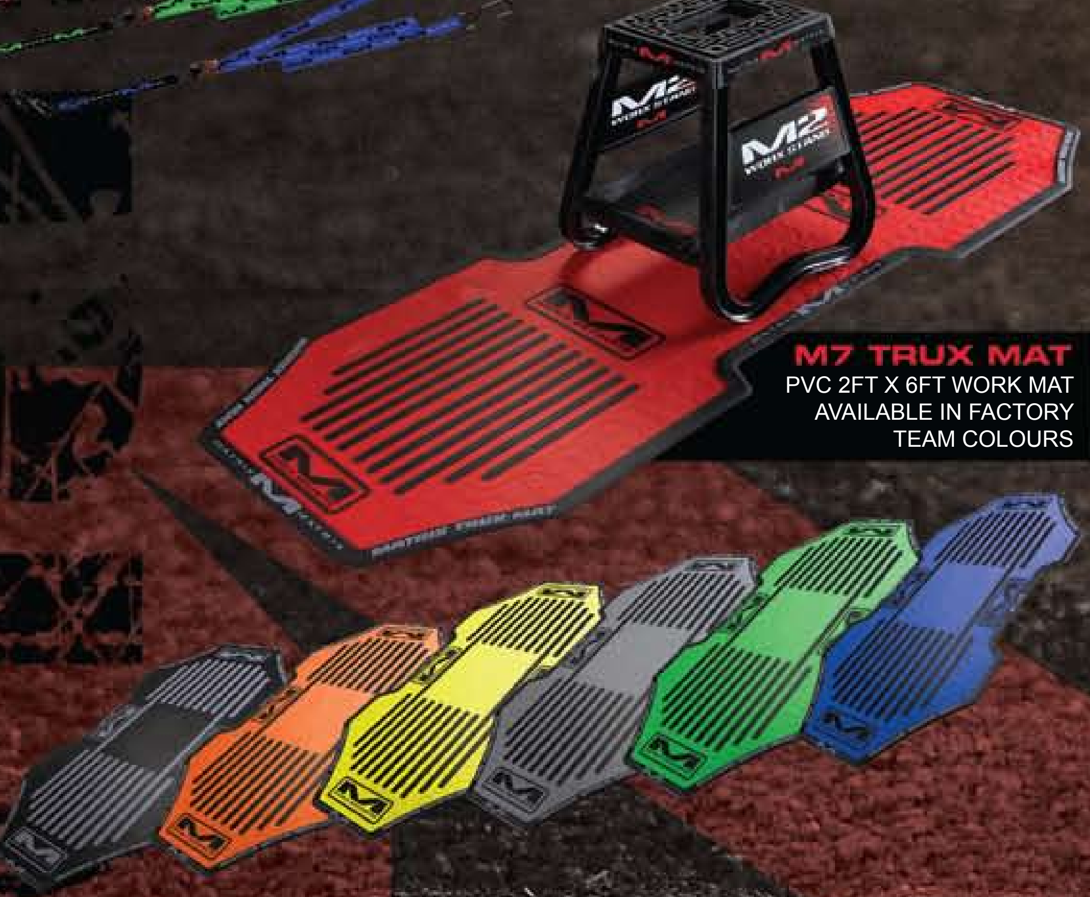
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MAX NAGL IN 2012 AND HIS FUTURE

Story by Geoff Meyer image by Ray Archer

Max Nagl has been in one of those rollercoaster seasons that just turn a rider upside down. First a serious back injury and an operation, then returning to KTM to find out his services would not be needed in 2013 and then he dramatic victory with Team Germany at the Motocross of Nations. Having now signed with the Factory Hondat team for 2013 the always friendly rider can start to prepare for what will be a long and draining 2013 season. We sat down and had a talk with Nagl about many things and this is what he told us.

The atmosphere in the German team was really good at the MXoN, really relaxed. We never expected to win, nobody in the team thought we would win, but we all thought a podium was possible. Germany had never won the event and going to Germany in 2013 with number one, two and three on the bikes we cannot ask for more than that.

For sure Marcus (Schiffer) was the big help. Ken (Roczen) and I wanted to do our best and we both felt we had the chance to finish well in our classes, but Marcus, to finish seventh in that first moto was just amazing. He stepped it up, but I knew he would step it up because he grew up riding in the sand and he is a good sand rider.

I expected America to struggle a little bit, because everyone knows there is no sand like Lommel, not in America, but then again I heard that Dungey was also brought up riding sand and I was surprised they were not better. I expected a little better for sure.

I think next year we will be okay with the pressure. I am looking forward to the MXoN in 2013. I mean I don't have a problem with pressure, because I should have had pressure this year with the injury and having to find a new team, that was pressure and I dealt with it okay.

Next year it is going to be difficult to win the MXoN, but we can also be sure we have a good chance, podium maybe, but anything can happen. That track will be good for the French, the Americans and the Italians will all be good in Teutschenthal.

I rode the Honda twice recently, we rode in Mantova and we did a little testing. I last rode for Honda back when I was on the 80cc and the 125cc, but then I moved to KTM for the last 10 years. The Honda is very easy to ride, it is a huge difference from the KTM, but I was able to get used to it quickly. The frame of the Honda is very different from the steel frame of the KTM. At first I wasn't sure if it was better or worse, it was just different. It is stiffer and easier to turn, but we have a lot of work to do to get the good setting for the Honda.

We would go to Japan for two weeks for testing, but now with the 2013 season starting earlier we only spend three days in Japan and then come back to Europe and start training.

Next season looks good, it is going to be tough, this year was tough, it looks a hard calendar with many races in a row, but I am excited about Qatar night race and also the races in places like Maggiora in Italy, the new race in Germany in Lausitzring, that will be nice, also Arco di Trento in Italy, a lot of nice circuits for the 2013 season.

I am so motivated for 2013, the team atmosphere is really nice and also the new bike, the feeling I have I think I can go quicker.

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BERCY SUPERC

STORY BY PASCAL HAUDIQUIERT IMAGES BY SIMON CUDBY

The 30th Edition of the Paris Bercy Supercross ‘fueled by Monster Energy’ will stay forever in the history of the event, as the French classic will be fully booked during three nights! The atmosphere was already amazing in the stadium for this first night, and Jake Weimer led the Americans to the top four positions in the main event.

The American riders dominate the three qualifying races, before posting the best lap times in the Superpole session (fastest was Eli Tomac, followed by Jake Weimer, Justin Brayton and Gregory Aranda) and later winning the ‘American race’ (Tomac won it, second was Weimer, third Cedric Soubeyras and fourth Justin Brayton). They were favourites for the main event, and once more they dominate all their rivals between two impressive FMX shows. Weimer got the holeshot, followed by Tomac and Brayton; posting the fastest lap times Weimer and Tomac battled together for the win during fifteen laps, and the end of the race was hectic as Weimer did a small mistake before the finish flag. Tomac took the lead for a few seconds, but Weimer finally passed him back to win the race, followed by Tomac, Brayton and Kyle Chisholm. Considered as one of the main rival of the Americans, Christophe Pourcel did a strong qualifying race (second behind Tomac) but didn’t qualified for the second American race and missed a good start in the main event; leader of the European SX series, Cédric Soubeyras was the best non Americain riders with a fifth position, two ranks ahead of Cyrille Coulon, Charles Lefrançois and Christophe Pourcel ninth of the race.

In the 250 class Valentin Teillet and Josse Sallefranque won both one heat, but it’s Sallefranque who won the overall tonight followed by Tyler Villopoto and Mike Valade as Teillet crashed in the second heat. Only eleventh in the qualifying session, Villopoto was faster in the races and got a podium despite a crash in the second race.

The second night of the 30th Supercross of Paris Bercy ‘fueled by Monster Energy’ was as usual the most exciting one with so many fans ready to cheer their heroes – riders, Freestylers, Monster or Pompom girls – and exhaust their air horns. The American riders enjoy this atmosphere, and trusted once more the podium of the main event with Jake Weimer winner, followed by Eli Tomac and Justin Brayton.

Once more the Americans were the kings of the night, but we’ll have to wait the third and last night to know who will be the new‘King of Bercy’. But with another win tonight, Jake Weimer took an option to collect this prestigious title as he leads Eli Tomac by two points. Winner of his heat race, Weimer just had one alert tonight during the Super pole session; the Monster Kawasaki rider was going to post the fastest lap when he crashed in the last corner! Tomac won this session followed by Justin Brayton and Christophe Pourcel, and Weimer’s fans just had to wait the next race to be confident before the main event. Jake won the ‘American race’, which turned to a US battle as Kyle Chisholm, Brayton and Tomac (who suffered a puncture in his rear tyre on the starting line) took the first four places. In the main event Weimer got the holeshot, and did a perfect race even if Tomac came back just one second behind him after fifteen laps; Eli didn’t got a great start but pushed until the finish flag, and he will be the main rival of Weimer in the King’s battle on Sunday. Second at the start Brayton finished in third, followed by Chisholm, Cédric Soubeyras and Cyrille Coulon. Winner of his heat race, Christophe Pourcel was unlucky in the main event as he crashed after the whoops section and retired.

ROSS 2012

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Greg ARANDA
30
J.WEIMER
12
MONSTER ENERGY
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DUNLOP

377
C.POURCEL
J.BRAYTON
ARC
MONSTER
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In the 250 class the strongest riders were again Josse Sallefranque and Valentin Teillet, who won one heat each. As Teillet crashed in the first race the overall win was for Sallefranque, who is now strongly leading the French SX Tour series. Third is Adrien Lopes, as Tyler Villopoto crashed and damaged one knee during he second heat.

The fans had to wait the last laps of the last main event on Sunday night to know who will be the new King of Bercy. It was finally Jake Weimer who won the 30th edition of the Paris Bercy Supercross 'fueled by Monster Energy' and the Kawasaki factory rider led his countrymen on the podium as Eli Tomac and Justin Brayton finished second and third.

Second in the main event behind Tomac during most of the race, and nearly sure to be the new King of Bercy after his wins on Friday and Saturday as he had a strong lead over Justin Brayton, Weimer put some drama in the race when he slides and crashed with four laps to go! He was third when he was back in the race, and at this moment lost the King of Bercy title; chasing back Brayton, he was back in second position in the penultimate lap to be crowned King of Bercy. "The three nights here are nerve-wracking. I knew I needed to do well on the first night to have a chance at the win. Then on the second you want to continue the roll but coming to the third night I knew only I could blow it! It's like a little championship. It is not easy. It's really awesome to be the King of Bercy because all my heroes came and raced and won here. This is my second year in Paris and I had fun in '11 but did not give myself much of a chance, but this time I wanted it. It is amazing to be able to get on the plane tomorrow knowing I have this achievement chalked off," said a delighted Weimer on the podium. It was an American podium with Eli Tomac – winner today of the main event – in second position and Justin Brayton – third of the three nights – in third position; Cedric Soubeyras was the best 'non American rider' with a fourth overall, after three consistent nights and the retirement of Kyle Chisholm who suffered a leg injury. Christophe Pourcel didn't enter this third night, as the French champion underwent surgery after his crash on Saturday.

Valentin Teillet won the 250 races on Sunday, but it was not enough to be crowned 'Prince of Bercy as he crashed on the previous days. It's Josse Sallefranque who is the new Prince, after regular and consistent races.

Bercy Supercross 2012 - The Results

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Friday

First heat: 1.Brayton (USA, Yamaha); 2. Aranda (FRA, Honda); 3.Coulon (FRA, Suzuki); 4.Sorby (FRA, Kawasaki) ; etc…. Second heat: 1.Weimer (USA, Kawasaki) ; 2.Chisholm (USA, Kawasaki) ; 3.Hahn (USA, Honda) ; 4.Lefrancois (FRA, Suzuki) ; etc… Third heat: 1.Pourcel (FRA, KTM); 2.Soubeyras (FRA, Honda); 3.Tomac (USA, Honda); 4. Izoird (FRA, Suzuki); etc… Last chance: 1.Martin (FRA, Honda); 2.Aubin (FRA, Honda); etc…. Main event: 1.Weimer; 2.Tomac; 3.Brayton ; 4.Chisholm ; 5.Soubeyras ; 6.Coulon ; 7.Hahn ; 8.Izoird ; 9.Lefrancois ; 10.Martin; etc…

Results 250. First heat: 1.Sallefranque (Honda); 2.Villopoto (USA, Kawasaki); 3.Lopes (Honda) ; 4.Teillet (Kawasaki) ; 5.Marrone (Honda) ; etc… Second heat: 1.Teillet ; 2.Sallefranque ; 3.Berthome ; 4.Lopes; 5.Verhaeghe (Kawasaki) ; etc… Overall: 1.Sallefranque; 2.Teillet; 3.Lopes ; 4.Irsuti (Yamaha) ; 5.Berthome ; 6.Marrone ; 7.Le Hir (Honda) ; 8.Macler (Suzuki) ; 9.Villopoto ; 10.Verhaegue ; etc…

Saturday

Results. First heat race : 1.Brayton (USA, Yamaha) ; 2.Soubeyras (FRA, Honda) ; 3.Izoird (FRA, Suzuki) ; 4.Clermont (FRA, Honda) ; etc… Second heat race: 1.Weimer (USA, Kawasaki) ; 2.Hahn (USA, Honda) ; 3.Coulon (FRA, Suzuki) ; 4.Martin (FRA, Honda) ; etc… Third heat race: 1.Tomac (USA, Honda) ; 2.Pourcel (FRA, KTM) ; 3.Chisholm (USA, Kawasaki) ; 4.Rombault (FRA, Honda), etc… Last chance: 1.Aranda (FRA, Honda) ; 2.Clermont (FRA, Honda) ; etc… Main event: 1.Weimer ; 2.Tomac ; 3.Brayton ; 4.Chisholm ; 5.Soubeyras ; 6.Hahn ; 7.Coulon ; 8.Lefrancois (FRA, Suzuki) ; 9.Pourcel ; 10.Izoird ; etc…

Sunday

Results 250 class. First heat : 1.Teillet (Kawasaki) ; 2.Villopoto (USA, Kawasaki) ; 3.Sallefranque (Honda) ; 4.Berthome (Kawasaki) ; 5.Valade (Honda) ; etc… Second heat : 1.Sallefranque ; 2.Valade ; 3.Berthome

; 4.Villopoto ; 5.Verhaeghe (Kawasaki) ; etc… Overall: 1.Sallefranque ; 2.Villopoto ; 3.Valade ; 4.Berthome ; 5.Irsuti (Yamaha) ; 6.Teillet ; 7.Le Hir (Honda) ; 8.Stauder (KTM) ; 9.Macler (Suzuki) ; 10.Marrone (Honda) ; etc…

Results. First qualifying heat: 1.Soubeyras (FRA, Honda); 2.Chisholm (USA, Kawasaki) ; 3.Hahn (USA, Honda) ; 4.Coulon (FRA, Suzuki) ; etc… Second qualifying heat: 1.Weimer (USA, Kawasaki); 2.Aranda (FRA, Honda) ; 3.Martin (FRA, Honda) ; 4.Lefrancois C.(FRA, Suzuki) ; etc…. Third qualifying heat: 1.Tomac (USA, Honda); 2.Brayton (USA, Yamaha) ; 3.Izoird (FRA, Suzuki) ; 4. Rombault (FRA, Honda) ; etc… Last chance: 1.Aubin (FRA, Honda) ; 2.Lefrançois A (FRA, Kawasaki) ; etc…. Main event: 1.Tomac; 2.Weimer ; 3.Brayton ; 4.Soubeyras ; 5.Izoird ; 6.Hahn ; 7.Coulon ; 8.Martin ; 9.Lefrançois C ; 10.Clermont (FRA, Honda); etc…

King of Bercy 2012 : 1.Weimer ; 2.Tomac ; 3.Brayton ; 4.Soubeyras ; 5.Hahn ; 6.Coulon ; 7.Chisholm ; 8.Izoird ; 9.Lefrançois C ; 10.Martin ; etc…

Results 250. First heat: 1.Teillet (Kawasaki) ; 2.Sallefranque (Honda) ; 3.Berthome (Kawasaki) ; 4.Valade (Honda) ; 5.Marrone (Honda) ; etc… Second heat : 1.Teillet ; 2.Lopes (Honda) ; 3.Berthome ; 4.Valade ; 5.Sallefranque ; etc… Overall classification (Sunday): 1.Teillet ; 2.Berthome ; 3.Sallefranque ; 4.Valade ; 5.Macler (Suzuki) ; 6.Lopes ; 7.Stauder (KTM) ; 8.Marrone; 9.Le Hir (Honda) ; 10.Irsuti (Yamaha) ; etc…

Prince of Bercy : 1.Sallefranque ; 2.Teillet ; 3.Berthome ; 4.Valade ; 5.Macler ; 6.Marrone ; 7.Lopes ; 8.Le Hir ; 9.Stauder ; 10.Irsuti ; etc…

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FIM MOTOCROSS WORLD CHAMPIONS

Antonio Cairoli - MX1 | Jeffrey Herlings - MX2

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DEMOLITION OF A

ANTONIO CAIROLI MARCHES TO GREATNESS IN 2012

STORY BY GEOFF MEYER IMAGES BY RAY ARCHER

His 2012 march to that sixth World Motocross Championship was something special. I had often looked at Cairoli as the rider who did enough to win, never pushed too hard and just accepted whatever result came his way as long as he was more consistent than his rivals throughout the season. In most cases that was exactly what would happen, and that is how he came about with his first five World titles in 2005, 2007, 2009, 2010 and 2011.

In 2006 and 2008 when he did lose his titles to Christophe Pourcel and Tyla Rattray I had the impression that he took his rivals a little too lightly early in the season and got caught out. Is he a better rider than both Pourcel and Rattray, without a doubt, but he gave those guys a chance and both riding well took it and he could never recover from starting from behind.

Sure in 08 he injured himself in South Africa and was ruled out of the remained of the season, but he really had to battle hard to race with both Rattray and Tommy Searle. He had also ridden the 450cc machine in pre-season and in my opinion that didn't help him. Despite Antonio mentioning to me in the pre-season and it wasn't a problem, he looked out of sorts when the season began, and as Rattray started the season with 1-1-1-17, Cairoli started with 2-2-2-9.

In 2012 though we got the same Antonio Cairoi early, but his late season charge was an Everts like charge to the World title. From the moment he had his DNF-DNF in the mud in Sweden the Italian legend went 1-2-1-1-1-1-1-1-1-1-1-1-1-1-1. Prior to Sweden he went 1-1-4-1-1-3-6-7-1-1-3-2-1-1, not bad, but nothing like the second part of his 2012 assault.

The question now is, what do his rivals need to do to compete? He has scared Christophe Pourcel back to America or into possible retirement, and his major rival Clement Desalle might just have missed the boat in the chance to be a World Champion. The tough Belgians attitude seems unprofessional at times and his mentality toward the press and his rivals borders on desperate. Hopefully with the help of Joel Smets and with his 2012 injuries healed he can find the form which has taken him to the top of the MX1 series points on more than one occasion.

Who can come forward in 2013 and take the challenge to Cairoli? In my opinion it will be either Max Nagl or Ken De Dycker. Nagl who moved to the Honda Factory team and De Dycker continue to improve on the Factory KTM. Both have tried to race with Cairoli in 2012 and both had had moments, but the biggest question is now much will the Italian improve in the winter? Until now it would have to be said he is at his peak. Will he peak more? Or will he start to slow?

Others who might give Cairoli the odd problem are Frenchman Gautier Paulin and Kevin Strijbos. Paulin has the speed to win often, but he always has the same problem with mid-season form, and that has cost him in each of his World Championship challenges. Strijbos who had finished

A CLASS

second in the World to Stefan Everts on two occasions is the experience rider of the class. Hardly an old man, but the fact he was second in the European 125cc Championship in 2000 and has been racing the FIM World Motocross Championships for more than a decade says that time is running out for the talented Belgian.

Interesting in 2001 when Strijbos finished 19th in the World 125cc Championship riders like James Dobb, Erik Eggens, Kenneth Gundersen, Steve Ramon, Luigi Seguy ruled the roost. The only riders left from that 2001 125cc title who still race in the World Championships are Marc De Reuver (if he continues) and Strijbos.

Of course the likes of Tommy Searle, Jeremy Van Horebeek and Joel Roelants might cause the odd surprise, all are class riders and Searle has tasted competition with Cairoli in previous years and come out on top. My money is on Searle to win a GP or two, and Van Horebeek to finish on the podium on occasions, but it would be asking too much for these three to battle Cairoli for a title in their first a season on the bigger bikes.

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CLEMENT DESALLE
Questions Unanswered

If you looked at the biggest rival for Antonio Cairoli in the last two years it would have to be Clement Desalle. The Belgian strongman has shown signed of taking the World crown from the Italian, but just when we all start believing Desalle drops the ball and losses his momentum. 2013 might just be the last time he gets the chance to go for a World Motocross Championship as the younger brigade of Jeffrey Herlings and many other MX2 riders start to press their position in the MX1 class.

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CHRISTOPHE POURCEL UNWANTED AND UNWILLING

IMAGE RAY ARCHER STORY GEOFF MEYER

The most disappointing thing for me in 2012 was the fact Christophe Pourcel didn't really battle with Cairoli on a regular basis. Despite the fact Pourcel is difficult to get to know and keeps to himself at the races I really like him and his attitude. I think he is honest with himself, but also confused with what the next step in his career should be. From his 2011 craziness 2012 was a pretty normal year, although speaking to people who have to work with him it isn't always a piece of cake.

Finishing fourth in this year's FIM World MX1 Championship should not be considered as a failure and winning three motos and one Grand Prix is also not shabby, however for some reason I get the feeling Pourcel was worth so much more than that.

His opening round performance at the Valkenswaard was terrible, and scoring just 12 points was something that put a lot of doubt in people's minds how long he would last. Would he against leave a team and head somewhere else, or fight through and perform to his best.

While Pourcel never really got to the level of his 2006 MX2 Championship, or his 2009 and 2010 seasons in America, when he came close to winning the AMA 250cc Championship (on both occasions missing out by a handful of points) he did stick out the whole season.

What did happen throughout the season though was a minor injury in England and stress between Pourcel and Gautier Paulin in certain moments. The two Frenchman never really got on and when Pourcel was left out of the French Motocross of Nations team for the Motocross of Nations it seemed like the final straw. He couldn't come to terms with the CLS Kawasaki team, and decided to stop racing Grand Prix Motocross.

Now without a rider for 2013 and recently picking up an injury at the Bercy Supercross the outcome of Pourcels future in the sport is very much a grey area. Such a talent should not be wasted and let's hope somebody picks up his services. Wherever the Frenchman ends up in 2013 I hope he will be happy and content that he did what he wanted to do.

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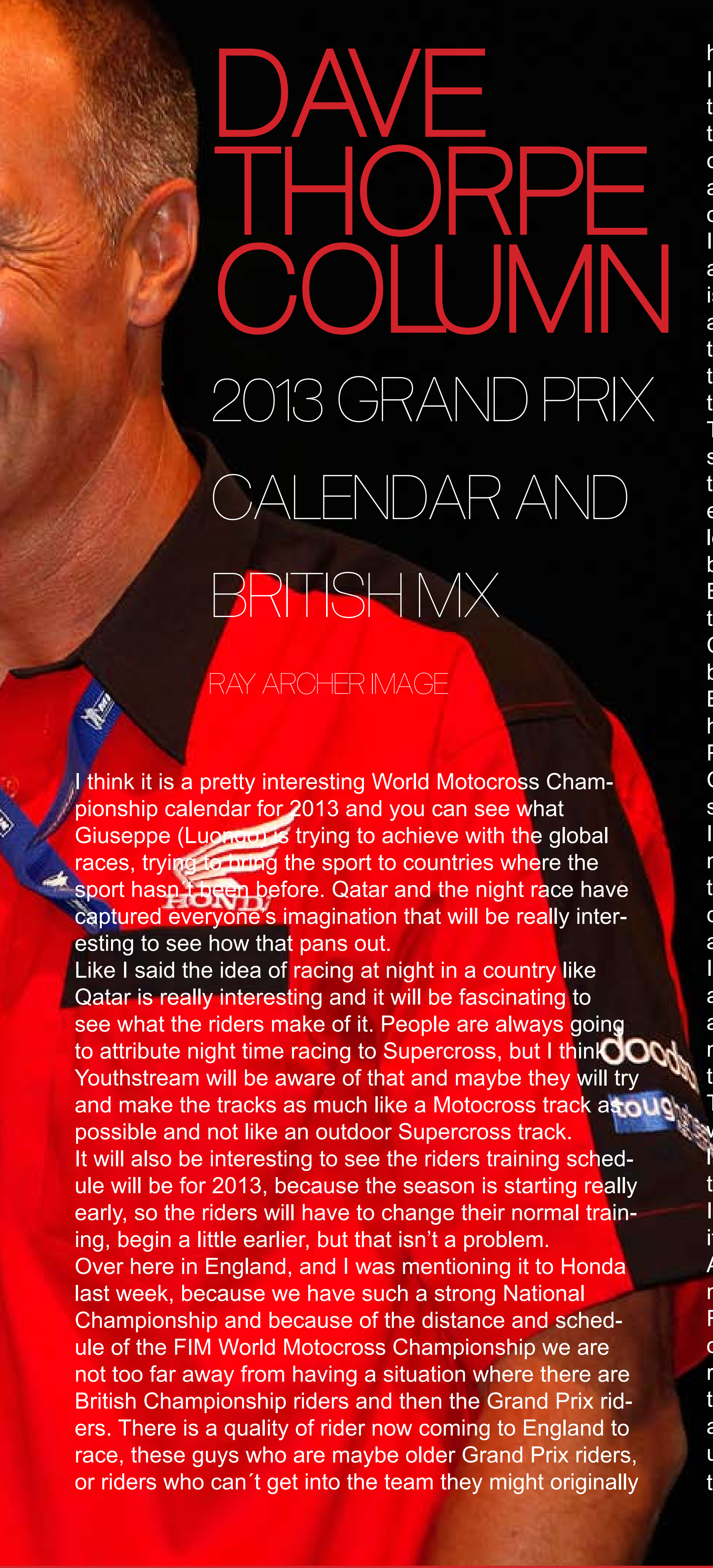

DAVE THORPE COLUMN

2013 GRAND PRIX CALENDAR AND BRITISH MX

RAY ARCHER IMAGE

I think it is a pretty interesting World Motocross Championship calendar for 2013 and you can see what Giuseppe (Luongo) is trying to achieve with the global races, trying to bring the sport to countries where the sport hasn´t been before. Qatar and the night race have captured everyone´s imagination that will be really interesting to see how that pans out.

Like I said the idea of racing at night in a country like Qatar is really interesting and it will be fascinating to see what the riders make of it. People are always going to attribute night time racing to Supercross, but I think Youthstream will be aware of that and maybe they will try and make the tracks as much like a Motocross track as possible and not like an outdoor Supercross track.

It will also be interesting to see the riders training schedule will be for 2013, because the season is starting really early, so the riders will have to change their normal training, begin a little earlier, but that isn't a problem.

Over here in England, and I was mentioning it to Honda last week, because we have such a strong National Championship and because of the distance and schedule of the FIM World Motocross Championship we are not too far away from having a situation where there are British Championship riders and then the Grand Prix riders. There is a quality of rider now coming to England to race, these guys who are maybe older Grand Prix riders, or riders who can´t get into the team they might originally have wanted.

It is a lot to ask a rider to do 18 Grand Prix´s and then also their National Championship, it is tough to put that amount of races into your schedule. I can generally see there will be GP riders and also a strong line-up of riders in the National Championship.

I think the way the National series is being run it all up the local Federation. If you look at the Maxxis and the Red Bull Pro Nationals in England, they are both run well, you have a lot of teams in UK that run professionally or semi-professionally and they need good sponsorship and they then need to have good races to show off those sponsors. The ACU and the MCF are on track with making sure we have good events to race at. Both have tried to make it as easy as possible for the riders who are racing the Grand Prix series. If you look in Italy they are trying to get their races done before the Grand Prix's begin.

Belgium has lost its way a little bit. I don't know the Federations need to make sure the National Championships are run will. I know Nicolas (Aubin) was really surprised when he pulled up to the British Championship opener, he couldn't believe how well organized it is. It looks like a mini Grand Prix. If you look at some of the other National Championship the riders are turning up in the sprinter van.

In every country if you make decision people are not always agreeing with it, but Youthstream seem to be on the right track with the FIM World Motocross Championships. It might be nice if MX2 had a little more depth, but maybe that will come.

I had heard the rumour about Hawkstone Park and I was excited. I mean I really like that circuit and it has so much history, it would have been nice to have a Grand Prix there, but who is to say they won't go there in the future.

There are some good tracks, a good mix, it is what the teams and the public want, you would like to think that somebody at Youthstream has listened to that and gone for some old school tracks. I am sure they will put their mark on it and design it a little more how they want it.

Another think and I will talk about it more in my next column. We have just started a Honda Off-Road centre, which will be three different circuits on one facility and will be for all riders. It gives the riders the chance to try Enduro, or Trials or Motocross. Stephen Sword will be there to help out as an instructor and he will also race MX2 in UK under the Honda Off-Road Centre banner. We can talk about it more next month.

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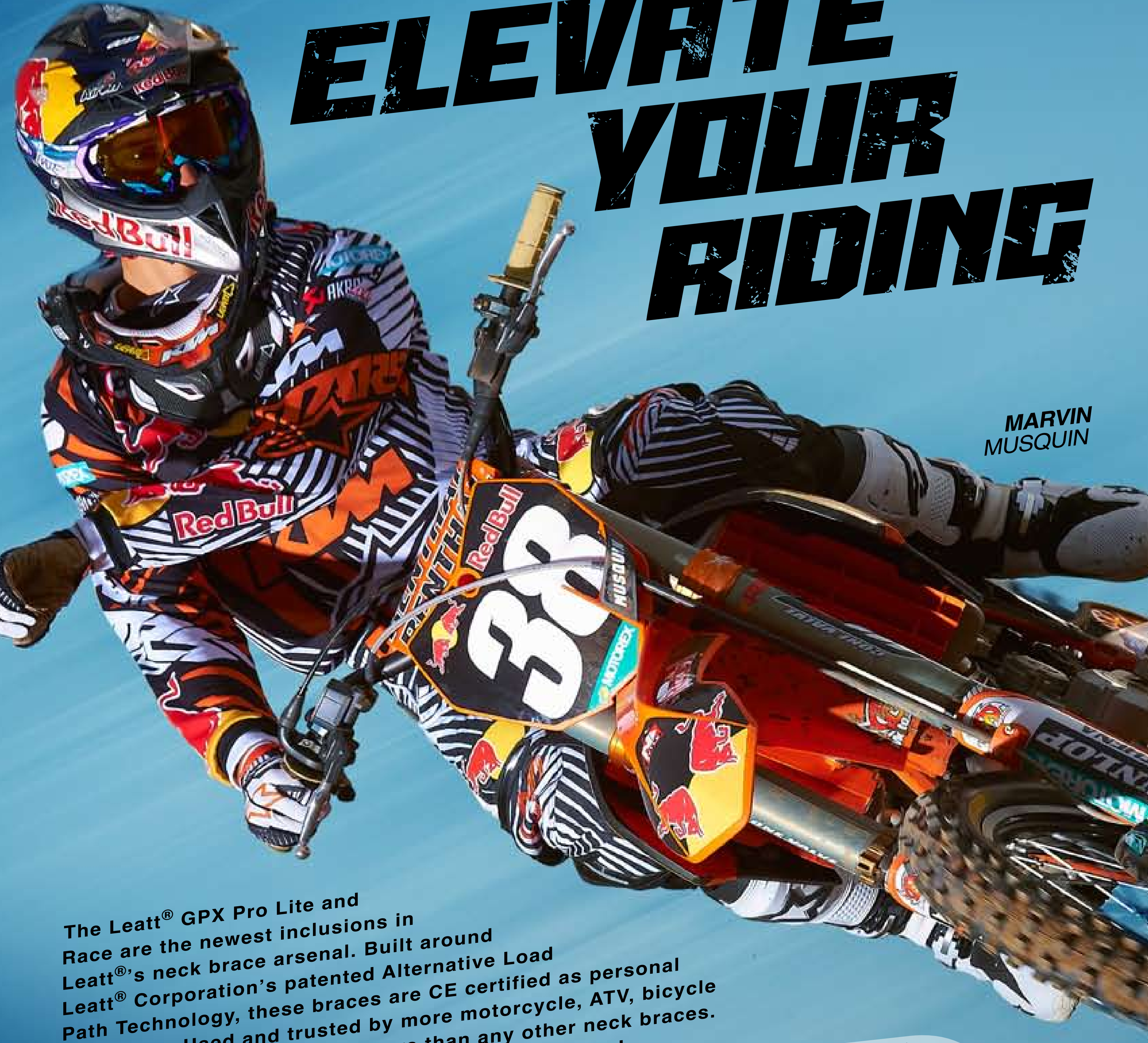

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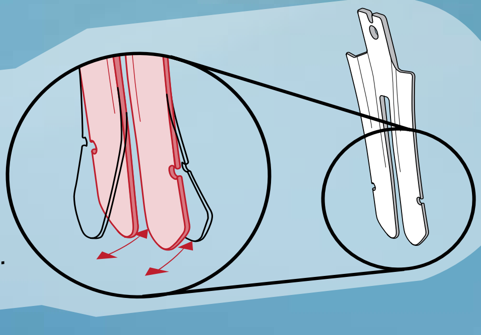

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M.I.A.

MISSING IN ADVENTURE

Does embracing dual-purpose bikes suggest we're ageing disgracefully, or simply becoming more practical? We marry inexperienced adventure riders with BMW's 650 Sertao and Yamaha's 660 Ténéré and head to the hills to find out.

ANDY WIGAN iKAPTURE IMAGES

"I've got no idea what snow clouds look like, but by the looks of those fast-moving fluffy things up ahead, I'd say we're about to ride into a snowstorm!" Davo is an old buddy of mine, so I let the contradiction of his astute roadside weather 'analysis' slide. "Glad I grabbed myself a pair of decent gloves for this three-day caper – despite your advice to the contrary, Andy," he says with a sideways snigger at my paper-thin gloves. Smithy then chimes in from the seat of the other bike: "Yep, snow's forecast down to a thousand metres altitude tonight. Saw it on the inflight news broadcast this morning, and my iPhone's weather apps are all saying the same thing."

I see Smith is also sporting a pair of gloves that wouldn't be out of place on an Eskimo, and consider pressing them both about why they'd failed to mention the likelihood of sub-zero temps and snowfalls back at Sydney Airport, where we'd collected Smith in glorious sunshine earlier in the day. But I decide to save it for a fireside discussion up at Geoff Ballard's farm, where the three of us plan to rendezvous with GB later that night.

"Listen, you mincers," I growl, glancing down at the BMW 1200's info-stacked digi dash. "Five degrees is really not that cold and hardly the kind of temperatures that bring snow. Okay, it's just dropped to four. But switch your bloody grip warmers on and see if you can survive the next 25 gruelling kilometres of tarmac up to Ballard's joint, where you'll be pampered with an open fire, cooked meal, hot shower and cosy bed."

But as I gaze up the road, I notice it disappears into some very ominous-looking clouds, which have suddenly brought on a 4pm 'sunset'. And before we've even travelled 10 kays, the temperature readout on the 1200's dash has fallen to 3 degrees ... 2 degrees ... 1 degree! Then the LED starts flashing, which I assume is a black ice warning. But by this stage, my visor's fogged, and we're engulfed by torrential rain that quickly morphs into sleet and then full-blown snow. I can't even tell whether I'm on the black stuff or the brown shoulders that flank it. Everything underfoot feels like slop or ice, or both. I pop my visor open for some directional assurance, and a snowflake spears me fair in the eyeball. It hurts like hell and it's all I can do not to collect the Armco.

“See if you blokes can survive the next 25km of tarmac up to Ballard’s joint, where you’ll be pampered with an open fire, cooked meal, hot shower and cosy bed.”

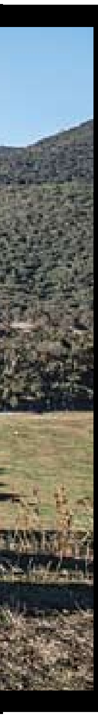
Thankfully, the three of us manage to tippy-toe into Ballard’s property without incident. The snow is already a couple of inches deep on the front lawn, and it feels as though we’ve arrived at some cedar lodge hideaway in Canada’s Rocky Mountains. Smith fumbles for his camera to capture the white phenomenon. Davo and I fire up the workshop’s cast-iron combustion burner that Ballard has kindly prepared for us, and stare out into the white-speckled darkness like a couple of kids ogling at snow for the first time in their lives.

At this point, it dawns on me that I’m travelling with two full-time professional photographers who both take the task of being ‘in sync’ with weather patterns very seriously, and I contemplate my complete lack of preparation for this trip. For the first time all day, I notice that Smith is sporting a swanky head-to-toe adventure ‘suit’ he’d taken home after a Triumph bike launch he recently shot. Davo looks every bit as warm and toasty in his own set of top-shelf gear he’d blagged from a distributor a few years back, and worn a sum total of twice since. I’m sporting your average trail-spec riding gear, and feeling horribly undergunned. My hands and legs are frozen to the bone, but I at least had the good sense to zip the liner back into my enduro jacket before leaving Sydney Airport.

“How are the mitts feeling, Andy?,” Davo inquires with mock concern. “Toasty on the palm-side – care of the grip warmers, thanks mate – but frozen top-sides,” I confess. “You?” To Davo’s credit, he refrains from serving me up an, ‘I told you so!’ or cocking on about how warm his hands are. Or maybe I just stopped listening. In any case, I quickly change the subject by grabbing a set of ‘elephant ears’ that Ballard has left on the workbench for us, and explain how my MX gloves and these simple, grip-engulfing devices will offer both warmth *and* dexterity for the big bikes’ controls. The boys are unconvinced, and carry on comparing Gortex grades and other features on their fancy waterproof adventure suits. Fashion victims!

My gear’s sodden in some spots and crisp in others, so I tear it off. It stands upright next to the fireplace for a minute or two before collapsing in its own melt-pool, and I riffle through my bag for something warm and dry. A hearty feed of steak, potato and red wine is just the tonic for our thawing brainsicles, and some time in the fireside massage chair helps relegate the afternoon’s chilling encounter to the sensory backburner.

It’s still snowing when Ballard and Brownie arrive in their trailer-towing motorhome around 10pm, and the duo burst through the front door in a plume of steamy breath and profanity about the frigid weather. Brownie’s a long-time mate of GB’s



THE BIKES, IN CONTEXT

How do these machines sit in the model line-ups from BMW and Yamaha? To get a handle on the design purpose and target market for each bike, we spoke to BMW's Miles Davis and Yamaha's Sean Goldhawk.

BMW 650 SERTAO

MILES DAVIS: "The 650 Sertao uses the same basic platform as the popular F 650 Dakar, which was discontinued in 2007. The Sertao is essentially a refresh of the Dakar, and released earlier this year. So BMW now has two Learner-approved 650cc singles in the range: the G 650 GS with a 19-inch front wheel, and the longer-travel G 650 GS Sertao with a 21-inch front. We also have two parallel twin options: the F 650 GS and F 800 GS. Then, of course, there's the flagship boxer-twin 1200s: the R 1200 GS and R 1200 GS Adventure. The 650 Dakar was always a very good seller, so the Sertao is a key part of our model line-up again now. It's got a high-torque, low-stress, fuel-efficient, low-maintenance engine, a relatively low seat height and is Learner-approved in Australia, so it's a great entry-level into full-on adventure riding or a stepping-stone to the other bikes in the range. Compared to basic 650 GS, the Sertao gets extra suspension travel, spoked wheels with a 21-inch up front, a bigger screen, and is styled to look much more like an adventure machine. It's very fuel-efficient and often used as a practical commuter bike. With switchable ABS, it'll handle Melbourne tram tracks in the rain, and then used to escape for the weekend. Unlike trail- or enduro-oriented big-bore singles, it can comfortably sit on 120km/h for extended periods on the road without sending you numb from vibration, or cross the Simpson Desert. It's priced very affordably, and there's a raft of accessories available for it – panniers and other luggage carrying options, different seat and windscreen options, engine protection kits, and an anti-theft alarm."

YAMAHA 660 TÉNÉRÉ

SEAN HAWKER-GOLDHAWK: "The Ténéré model evolved from the XT500 and was released in 1983. It went on to enjoy an illustrious record in the Dakar Rally. The bike was revamped and re-released in 2009 with major upgrades to components and styling. As with the first Ténéré, its development was driven by Jean-Claud Olivier, who was the President of Yamaha Motor France until recently and who regularly competed in early Dakar races. With its 21-inch front tyre, 23-litre fuel tank, and new-generation fuel-injected powerplant, the relaunched 660 Ténéré made a clear statement about its off-road capabilities. It also acted as a precursor to our 1200cc Super Ténéré released soon afterward. With the two models, it positions Yamaha Australia very well to capitalise on the growing adventure bike market. We sold more than 200 units of the 660 Ténéré in both 2010 and 2011, which is similar to the numbers BMW did with all variants of their 650 GS. Along with Yamaha's more road-oriented XT660R – which comes with a smaller tank and less suspension travel – the XTZ660 Ténéré is Learner-approved and, in effect, Yamaha's entry-level machine for those looking to get serious about adventure riding. When dirt bike guys take a look at the recommended service intervals for the Ténéré, they do a double-take. Owners don't have to think about oil changes or valve clearances for 10,000 or 20,000km. The 660 Ténéré does come with ABS in Europe. But it's not available in Australia, because there's limited demand for it from off-road riders here, plus it would make the model significantly more expensive. Priced at less than 14 grand – including $660 worth of free accessories – it's excellent value for such a low-maintenance, versatile machine that'll happily travel anywhere in, or around, Australia."

and the two have returned from racing the Master class at an Amcross round at Bega on the NSW south coast. Evidently, they've also had their fair share of sketchy moments on the icy mountain roads. They huddle around the fire and wrap themselves around a glass of red. We retire to the workshop, stoke its fire to ensure the sleeping quarters directly above get some warmth, and suss the weather report. It looks like we'll be lucky to see maximum temps anywhere north of 5 degrees for days, so Ballard and I custom-fit the elephant ears to the bikes to ward off the wind-chill. I scrounge a pair of GB's old adventure riding duds. They might be a size too small, but they're waterproof and come with a fleecy liner I like the looks of, and a cable-tie works a treat to secure the waist. I claim a disowned balaclava from the corner of the workshop, have a quick chat with the boys about tomorrow's plan, and toddle off to bed, feeling a whole lot more contented and element-proof.

We feel like a posse of arctic adventurers the following morning as we gear up for the 300km route up to Mount Wilson, through to a few small townships down on the Hawkesbury River and back again. It feels strange to be riding *out* of GB's, as we're more accustomed to using the loops on his property as a destination for testing and photography. This time around, "Ballaranch" is our base station for a couple of frozen forays into a network of riding terrain Ballard assures us we'll love. "It's picturesque, a decent mix of road and dirt, has a few sketchy singletrail bits, and some options en ➘

"BMW's Sertao is more at-home on the tarmac than dirt, while the Yami's Tenere is the other way around. But both re great introductory bikes to a world of adventure."

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AND HERLINGS
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DÉJÀ-VU

Tony Cairoli takes his third MX1 World Championship title on the KTM 350 SX-F still with races in hand. And after Marvin Musquin (2010) and Ken Roczen (2011), Jeffrey Herlings, riding the KTM 250 SX-F has ensured that the Red Bull KTM Factory Racing Team remains unbeaten in both classes for the last three years – WORLD CLASS!

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route to stop for coffee and food," GB summarises, before throwing a leg over his big Beemer and disappearing out the front gate. Brownie, meanwhile, has taken one look at the weather and decided it's a good day to be indoors.

> "We're engulfed by torrential rain that quickly morphs into sleet and then full-blown snow. I can't even tell whether I'm riding on the black stuff or the brown shoulders that flank it."

Despite running Yamaha's national off-road race program for the best part of a decade, Ballard has evolved into a addicted adventure rider these days. And despite the racing ties with Yami, he's become something of an unofficial ambassador for BMW's adventure bikes – more specifically, the R 1200 GS Adventure that he and his mates regularly take on long, challenging rides (GB also has two adventure-modified XT660s). And it soon becomes apparent that GB's got this adventure caper dialled. We wind a picturesque path up the western slopes of the Blue Mountains via routes the rest of us have never even known about, but which are less than 5km from roads we've regularly travelled for years. There's no lairizing or wheestanding. It leaves more time to take in the views, smell the roses, and immerse ourselves in the journey. While Ballard stays aboard his trusty 1200, the three of us rotate between the BMW 650 Sertao, Yamaha 660 Ténéré, and the near-new R 1200 GS Adventure 'mothership' I've borrowed from BMW – to carry the camera gear and act as the adventure bike benchmark on which the two smaller-capacity all-rounders could be judged. Following Ballard down firetrails, unused access roads and cliff-hugging tracks built by convicts, we make short work of linking familiar landmarks, and earn ourselves plenty of café time back at Bilpin, where we lap up the sunshine, grab a 10-minute siesta and wonder what the rest of the world is doing on a Monday afternoon. I contemplate how just half a day's ride has cleansed my mind and put once-pressing obligations into better perspective. GB treats us to an alternative route home, with a mersmerising concoction of flowing, undulating sweepers on dirt roads and freshly laid tarmac. We arrive back at his farm in time for a golden sunset and a few Mexican beers of matching shade. We swap notes about the pros and cons of the machines, relive a few sketchy moments, and check the helcam has captured the flavour of the day.

Now assured that the trio of relative adventure newbies under his care are capable staying upright on unfamiliar 200kg steeds, Ballard hatches plans for a more challenging route for our second day, and enlists desert racing legend, Allan "AJ" Cunynghame, as our specialist guide. The 1986 Australian Safari winner and 11-time Baja 1000 racer is born and bred in Bathurst, and intent on giving us the full cultural experience of the motorsport-mad town. After 100km of chilly morning air and sketchy, frost-covered wooden bridges, we meet AJ at Elie's – his favourite Bathurst café – for an indulgent breakfast. It's soon apparent that AJ's a regular in the

establishment and a popular figure in town, and he jokes with the owner and waiters while talking us through the route he's got planned for the day. "After a lap of Mount Panorama," AJ explains, "we'll take the notorious Bridle Track that links Bathurst to the historical gold mining town of Hill End. It follows the Macquarie River for miles and is a good, fun ride, with majestic views and a couple of decent river crossings. There's a few slick, rough sections, but nothing too nasty. We'll have a feed at the Hill End pub, and then scoot over to Sofala where they serve a great coffee. From there, we can cut through to Turon Gates and Capertee, before heading back through Sunny Corner and over to GB's for 'Guest Speaker Night'. How's that sound?," he asks with a self-satisfied smile.

"Was that a rhetorical question, AJ?," Smithy asks. "Great trails, epic views, a rock solid food and coffee plan, and two guides to make sure we don't get lost ... how do you think that sounds, mate? Let's get into it."

The 350km round trip delivers everything AJ suggests, and more. Ten minutes out of Bathurst and it feels like we're in the middle of nowhere, and it stays that way all day. The Hill End pub meal and Sofala coffee are everything they're cracked up to be, the landscape around Capertee is magnificent, and we retrace a few of the 2010 A4DE trails back through Dark Corner and Portland. The setting sun sets the western horizon ablaze, just as a huge full moon climbs above the Blue Mountains to the east. And as we hit the highway, the glowing moon hovers dead-centre above the road like something out of a sci-fi movie and renders the black tarmac silver.

At the same turnoff where Davo had delivered his prediction about the impending snowstorm a few days earlier, we notice a marked drop in temperature. There aren't any clouds, so the chance of snow is slim. But the air temp is already down to 1 degree, and the wind-chill at 100km/h is unspeakably brutal.

That night, it's a rowdy affair back at the Ballaranch. A few locals pop over for the traditional Guest Speaker Night, but GB's got something else in store tonight. He wants to test his theory that "Shazza's Cabinet" (his favourite cask of Shiraz Cabernet) is as good, or better, than the trumped-up bottled labels you pay $20 or $30 for at the bottlo. So he buys a selection of red on the way home and, using methodology he's obviously put a lot of thought into, enlists seven of us to taste-test the four reds. Ranked ➘

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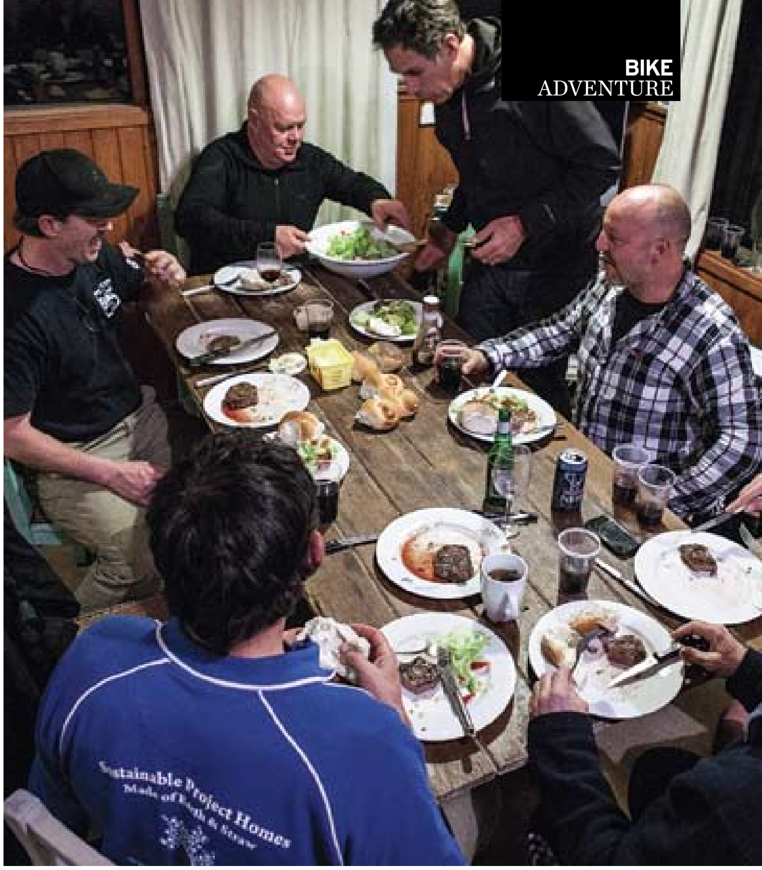
from one through four and awarded points as if it's a moto (25, 22, 20 and 18 points), the $10 bottle takes the title with five of the seven starters preferring it. Ballard is mildly content that Shazza's Cabinet finishes a respectable second, but absolutely thrilled the top-shelf $30 bottle comes stone motherless last.

The combination of a long day in the saddle, wind-blown faces, lively banter and lashings of quaffable red guarantee we'll all sleep well, and AJ's already looking comfortable, face-down on the couch. I wander out to the workshop, settle in to the massage chair and flick the tele on to watch the Tour de France, and somehow manage to fall asleep in the vertebrae-pounding contraption. Smith has to be out the door at 5am to shoot the 2013 Kawasakis down near Wollongong, so he's off to bed early, and suggests the rest of us do the same.

Davo and I are in no rush the next morning. It's a glamour day, but there's a dozen eggs and plenty of ham and fruit we need to polish off before heading home. We look for excuses to delay our departure, but by mid morning, we've run out of anything remotely legitimate. We thank GB for his hospitality and hit the road.

When we strike traffic around Katoomba, it's all I can do not to turn tail and head to the hills. But I dutifully plod back toward suburbia and the commitments that come with it. Soul-destroying as the realisation is, I also feel somehow richer for the adventure bike experience, and begin plotting my next exploratory. I think I like this adventure bike thing.



HOW THE BIKES COMPARE

So where do the 650 Sertao and 660 Ténéré 'fit' into the motorcycle landscape? Well, they're much more than a tarted-up DR650 or KLR650 with inflated price tags. They're both low-maintenance, go-anywhere, purpose-built adventure bikes. With fuel-injected engines, cush-drive hubs and wind protection, they'll comfortably sit at highway speeds all day, and yet they've got enough suspension and ground clearance for extended off-road stints.

We took the two machines for a 1000km shakedown (about 30% of which was off-road) over three days to get a feel for their relative performance. Both were in standard trim, aside from a set of Akrapovic pipes that had been fitted to the Yamaha. And we dropped the air pressures in their standard Metzeler Tourance dual-purpose hoops to 22-24psi for better all-round performance.

COMPONENTRY & ERGOs

At first glance, the Ténéré is a noticeably bigger and more imposing machine. It's taller, wider, heavier, comes with almost twice as much fuel as the Sertao, and appears to be built with a distinct leaning toward off-road terrain. As a package, the Ténéré has a more modern, edgy, genuine adventure bike aesthetic. Its cast swingarm says off-road more than the Beemer's. It's slimmer through the girth. It gets protective rubber boots on the fork sliders and a rally-style front mudguard. And its instrument panel (digital speed and fuel-level readouts and an analogue tacho) is practical and easy to read. The 650 Sertao may be a refreshed version of the 650 Dakar, but BMW's design team could certainly have made a more concerted effort to upgrade its component spec in the five years since the Dakar disappeared.

With a 40mm lower seat height, the Sertao is less intimidating. It seems to be designed for the rider who spends most of the time in the seat. In the standing position, it's porkier than the Yami and forces you to ride with bowed legs. Tall riders will feel pretty cramped on the BMW, and look to fit the higher seat option. But at $400, that's not a cheap tweak. Having ridden in sub-zero temperatures, we can confirm the heated grips are no gimmick. Though an aftermarket kit can be fitted to the Yami for $130. On the downside, the BMW has no fuel gauge, but it does have a warning light and 4 litres of reserve.

Both bikes have long-life steel sprockets, headlights that actually work and bashplates and handguards as standard equipment. But what's with the 1980s-spec spindly little footpegs they both run? If you plan to spend much time off-road, a decent set of pegs will be the first thing on your shopping list. Similarly, the brake pedal and gear-shifter are old-school steel units and easily bent. And while the Metzeler Tourance tyres are okay for the firetrail, you sure wouldn't plan a Simpson Desert crossing with them.

THE ENGINES

With a similar bore and stroke configuration and lots of oil volume, these two machines' powerplants are designed to be big on torque and small on maintenance. If you're thinking about adding performance parts, then you ought to be buying something else. A new exhaust system isn't going to unleash a heap of latent grunt. That said, both bikes capable of accelerating uphill in fifth gear from 2500rpm, which is exactly the sort of power you want after eight hours in the saddle. They're broad, torquey, smooth and versatile powerplants, albeit thoroughly unexciting if you're used to a big-bore enduro-spec dirt bike.

As you'd expect, both machines run tall final gearing with five-speed transmissions. At 100km/h, the Yami revs at 4000 in top ↘

HOW THE BIKES COMPARE (CONTINUED)

gear, whereas the BMW is at 4700rpm and could do with a sixth gear for highway use – both to bring the revs down and help fuel economy. However, we calculated that the Beemer uses just 4 litres per 100km, making it extremely fuel-efficient. That's why it can get away with the relatively small 14-litre fuel tank, and travel 350km between fuel stops.

THE HANDLING

The BMW handles surprisingly well on the road. It's nimble, tips into turns easily, has neutral steering and isn't easily unsettled when you hit a mid-corner bump. But it soon finds it limitations in loose, rough terrain. To us, the Sertao feels more like it's designed to tolerate off-road conditions rather than embrace them.

Despite its bigger screen offering pretty good wind protection, the Yamaha isn't as composed on the black stuff. Its suspension wallows on faster bumpy corners, and it takes more of a conscious effort to crank it into turns. But as soon as you hit the dirt, the Yamaha is noticeably more confidence inspiring, especially on the bigger hits. Of course, neither of these 200kg machines likes to be jumped, but the Yami resists bottoming better. Under acceleration, and even with its dual-purpose tyres, the Ténéré's rear-end hooks up nicely on gravel roads, and the shock does a very respectable job of keeping the rear wheel on the ground and driving predictably.

As riders with a dirt bike background, we can't help point out both bikes' limited suspension adjustment. We get that they're intentionally kept simple for newcomers to the adventure market. But for machines designed to work both on- and off-road – and carry luggage on occasion – added suspension adjustability would certainly make them more versatile.

The OTF preload adjuster on the Beemer is handy, but there's no adjustment at all on the bike's fork. The Yamaha runs a conventional preload collar on its shock and has a huge range of fork preload adjustment – which is just as well, because the bike's front-end is way too soft until you wind on 20 turns (of 27) of spring preload. The Brembo brakes on both machines aren't state of the art, but they offer plenty of stopping power and pretty good feel.

THE VERDICT

Both the Sertao and Ténéré are the perfect introduction to the adventure bike market. The Beemer is more at-home on the tarmac than dirt, while the Yami is the other way around. Compared to the BMW R 1200 GS Adventure – which is generally regarded as the benchmark in the adventure bike market – these machines aren't in the same realm. Sure, the Sertao has heated grips and switchable ABS, but neither Sertao nor Ténéré get any of the electronic safety features of the Adventure – such as traction control, tyre pressure monitoring or electronic suspension adjustment. Then again, they come at less than half the price. And they'll get you started with an addiction you can live with for life!

BIKE SPECS

	BMW G 650 GS SERTAO	YAMAHA XTZ660 TÉNÉRÉ
RRP (incl GST, excl pre-delivery)	$12,700 ($13,350 with /switchable ABS)	$13,999
DISTRIBUTOR	www.bmwmotorrad.com.au	www.yamaha-motor.com.au
WARRANTY	24-month unlimited km (parts & labour)	24 months, unlimited km (parts & labour)
ENGINE		
CAPACITY	652.0cc	659.0cc
BORE x STROKE	100.0 x 83.0mm	100.0 x 84.0mm
COOLING	Liquid-cooled	Liquid-cooled
ENGINE TYPE	Single-cylinder, 4-valve DOHC, four-stroke	Single-cylinder, 4-valve SOHC, four-stroke
COMPRESSION RATIO	11.5:1	10.0:1
TRANSMISSION	5-speed	5-speed
FINAL GEARING	16/47 (Cush-drive)	15/45 (Cush-drive)
CLUTCH	Wet, multi-plate, cable-operated	Wet, multi-plate, cable-operated
FUEL CAPACITY	14 litres (with 4L Reserve)	23 litres (with 5.8L Reserve)
FUELLING	Dell'Orto EFI (43mm throttle body)	Mikuni EFI (44mm throttle body)
SUSPENSION		
FORK	Mazzocchi 41mm (210mm travel)	Soqi 43mm (210mm travel)
SHOCK	Sachs (210mm travel)	Sachs (200mm travel)
GEOMETRY		
CLAIMED WEIGHT (fluids, no fuel)	193kg (dry weight: 177kg)	209kg (dry weight: 183kg)
WHEELBASE	1484mm	1500mm
SEAT HEIGHT*(claimed)*	860mm	865mm
RUNNING GEAR		
HANDLEBARS	BMW - 22mm	Yamaha - 22mm (with crossbar)
FRONT TYRE (as tested)	Metzeler Tourance EXP - 90/90-21	Metzeler Tourance - 90/90-21
REAR TYRE (as tested)	Metzeler Tourance EXP - 130/80-17	Metzeler Tourance - 130/80-17
BRAKES		
FRONT	Brembo - 1 x 300mm disc	Brembo - 2 x 298mm discs
REAR	Brembo - 240mm disc	Brembo - 245mm disc
ABS	Switchable ABS System (optional)	Not available in Australia

*MEASURED ERGOS

	BMW G 650 GS SERTAO	YAMAHA XTZ660 TÉNÉRÉ
GROUND CLEARANCE	259mm	261mm (+2mm)
PEG HEIGHT	374mm (+18mm)	356mm
SEAT HEIGHT (Measured)	861mm	899mm (+38mm)
PEG-TO-SEAT DISTANCE	487mm	543mm (+56mm)

REAL-WORLD RATING

	BMW G 650 GS SERTAO	YAMAHA XTZ660 TÉNÉRÉ
FUEL ECONOMY	4.0L/100km	4.54L/100km
FUEL RANGE	350km	508km
LONG DISTANCE SEAT COMFORT	9 out of 10	7 out of 10
WIND PROTECTION	6 out of 10	7 out of 10
BASHPROOFABILITY	6 out of 10	7 out of 10
HEATED GRIPS	Yes (two-stage)	No
SUSPENSION ADJUSTMENT - Fork	Not available	Spring preload
SUSPENSION ADJUSTMENT - Shock	Spring preload (remote dial), Comp damping	Spring preload
LEARNER APPROVED (LAMS)	Yes	Yes
PILLION COMFORT	7 out of 10	7 out of 10
ROADSIDE ASSISTANCE	Yes - 2 years	No

MORE ONLINE...

For details about the bikes' service intervals, RRPs relative to other adventure bikes on the market, and footage of riding in NSW's picturesque Central West, check out www.transmoto.com.au

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AUSSIE SUPERCROSS

The Australian Supercross Championship is without question the second most impressive Supercross series in the World to the American series. With names like Chad Reed and Ben Townley on the podium this muddy event in Toowooma really has a big name feel about it. Rice image

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MONSTER ENERGY
SUPERCROSS
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GEICO
TOYOTA
YAMAHA

GENOA SUPERCROSS

Genoa was also a great event with a handful of American riders and Europe riders involved. Genoa is probably the second biggest Supercross in Europe after Bercy and always attracts good riders and large crowds.

5
C.BOULON
SAVARY
Bihr
MOTUL
Polisport
SUZUKI
12
L.WEIMER
Kawasaki
DUNLOP
ACERBIS

BERCY SUPERCROSS

Bercy Supercross and the riders burst out of the start. It is Jake Weimer (12) and Eli Tomac (19) who have the inside run. Just look at all that color. Something that is special about Bercy is the lights and glamor of the event. Simon Cudby image

GENOA SUPERCROSS

The Genoa Supercross is held in a beautiful stadium and as you can see the spectators have a really good view of the action. Names such as McGrath, Reed and Cairoli have ridden this race and all have been appreciated by the Italian public. Nothing like going indoors for winter.

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STEVE WHITELOCK A MAN IN THE RIGHT PLACE

Story and Images By Geoff Meyer

For Steve Whitelock his passion for Motorcycle racing began at an early age, yet it was in the summer of 1976 that he began to make waves in the sport he loved. It was then the American Honda team decided to head to Europe and challenge Gaston Rahier for the World 125cc Motocross championship they took with them two-time AMA 125cc Motocross champion Marty Smith and 1973 AMA 500cc champion Pierre Karsmakers. Whitelock was in charge of taking Smith and Karsmakers to World title glory, although all went pear shaped as machine trouble ended what was meant to be a dream run in Europe.

“I was working with Honda America in 1975 and they decided they would send Marty Smith and Pierre Karsmakers to the World 125cc and 500cc Motocross championships the following year. I would go over as the team manager. We went over for the 1976 season and didn’t have all the best luck, we had some bike problems. One of the things that made me a little sad about that era was the fact Marty had not really lost in America, he was the big name in the 125cc class. We took him to Europe and had some mechanical problems, the motorcycle let him down, we really taught him how to accept a loss, and we should have had better bikes for him. He went back to America and he was never the same, he never got used to losing, but he learnt how to lose, I was disappointed we did that to him. We tried really hard, we used to have the parts come in from Japan and then have somebody drive all night to bring them to the Grand Prix. Our drive would arrive in the middle of the night and we would get those parts on the bike. We worked pretty hard in those days. I think Marty and Gaston Rahier was very close in speed, I think had we not had so many problems we would have won the championship with him. I ran Marty and Pierre in 1976, then we had Brad Lackey in 1977 and then Lackey and Graham Noyce in 1978, of course the following year Noyce won the World 500cc championship, although I was back in America when Noyce won. “

With the disappointment of losing title after title Whitelock moved away from Motocross, spent some time at home, then got another call from the Honda Company. This time Whitelock went into Road Racing and accepted new challenges. It was Motocross though that ran through the veins of Whitelock, he returned to Grand Prix Motocross in the winter of 1984.

“I stayed at home in California from 1979 until 1982, then Honda called me and asked if I wanted to work in the Road Racing, I worked with Marco Luchinelli and then transferred back to Motocross in 1984, working with Andre Vromans, I was okay with that, I had been involved with Dirt Track, Motocross, Road Racing and to go back to Motocross was okay with me.”

Steve Whitelock
SX / MX Series

Whitelock remained with the HRC factory team, taking the Honda team into one of the greatest era's in GP Motocross history. Wins would come easy this time, the Smith/Karsmakers era was a thing of the past and the machines that came out of Honda factory in Japan were the best in the . Grand Prix paddock. From the years of 1983 until 1994 Honda were unbeatable, winning 12 World 500cc championships in a row. Whitelock was around for much of that success.

"It was a great period with Honda, we had the HCR works team with guys like Dave Thorpe, Eric Geboers, Andre Malherbe, and I also put the deal for Bayle to race for the Honda team in the 125cc class, which was pretty exciting. I think that era was such a special time for Motocross in Europe, we all called it our own dynasty, we had built a really strong team, with so much love, and friendship. When Honda decided to pull the plug on the HRC effort in Europe we were all disappointed, I am still disappointed with what went down in Europe. For a manufacture like Honda, which such a huge resource I can't understand why they would tear it down like they did, and never return. Now the market is not important in Europe, the importance is now in America, which is where Honda wants to put their money in. To be honest I wouldn't go back to Europe myself after that the sport has gone through. It's not even a skeleton of what is was back in the 1970's and 80's, that was truly the golden era of Grand Prix Motocross, now it's something totally different."

For Whitelock the greatest moment for the HCR era came at the final round of the World 500cc championship of 1986. All three HRC riders (Thorpe, Malherbe and Geboers) went into the last round of the championship with a chance of winning the title, in the end it was Dave Thorpe who took victory with 316pts, followed by Malherbe on 311 and Geboers on 299.

"I clearly remember Luxembourg in 1986, all three of the riders could have won the championship, and it was the last round of the championship. After the first moto Eric had eliminated himself by having a crash, and then David and Andre went at it in the second moto. There was so much pressure, even though we couldn't lose. We never treated any rider differently. I didn't have a favourite, I loved them all, they were such nice guy's, and they were all great men. The thing I enjoyed about 500cc Motocross was the 40 minutes motos plus two laps. You would watch the race, in the early going the young kids could match the pace, yet in that last 10 minutes the mean just shine, that was when guys like Thorpe, Malherbe and Geboers would come into their own. I also remember at the Apple Orchard in Germany, once again we had Thorpe. Geboers, Hakan Carlqvist, Jobe, so many big names of the sport, they just raced for the complete time, the whole legend group."

Whitelock had many a grand moment with three time World 500cc Motocross champion Dave Thorpe, and while he stops short of saying Thorpe was the greatest, he enjoyed both the happy moments of Luxembourg and the sadness of the eluded titles.

"Dave Thorpe is probably one of the most determined, strongest riders you will ever meet. A great rider, he did it with strength, he wasn't loaded with talent, so much mental strength. You get to know them emotionally, he broke his collarbone one year, and I took him back to Amsterdam Airport. I'll tell you it was a tough ride, he was such a big strong boy, yet he was so depressed, it was tough. As a rider, you could not ask for a nicer guy, his work ethic was very good. Then you had Andre Malherbe, he raced with less effort than both Dave and Eric (Geboers), but all three were great riders."

Being a good team-manager was something Whitelock was proud of, although it was what you gave to a rider, and what a rider gave back in return that many saw as the reason Whitelock was seen as one of the most popular team managers in Grand Prix history.

"When you go through the things you go through with the riders, that is so special, the bad times, injury, title loss, at that point when they are so down that they cry on your shoulder, then the happy moments, when their children are born, or winning a Grand Prix or championship. What I think is that you have to believe in your riders 100%, that is important, you have to believe that they can do anything, and if they feel that, they will be happier, and more confident."

With a handful of World Motocross championships to his teams name Whitelock returned to Road Racing, this time though it would be more in a political role.

"I went back to Road Racing again in 1988, worked as the team consultant, I was the Honda representative who would talk to the FIM, there were many changes going on back then, we worked in a way to organize a more professional rapport with the promoters, I don't want to say we wanted to eliminate the FIM, but we wanted to modify their control over Road Racing. We respected the FIM, but at that time they were a problem, it was very political, and very stressing. At the end of the year I had enough, I went into the team truck and told the Japanese that I wanted to go home."

After a time-out, and working hard in his parts business in Southern California Whitelock again got the call from the sport he loved. Despite having spent many years trying to work against the FIM Whitelock was invited to work with the FIM in 1996. It was a partnership which would also go for many years, and see Whitelock gain more respect from the industry.

"I spent the next few years getting my small business going, a motorcycle parts shop, in 1996 I got a call from FIM and they wanted me to work as their technical inspector for World Superbike. I figured the FIM knew I knew a lot about the rules, one of my jobs at Honda was to exploit the rule book to the teams advantage, so the FIM knew I was good at it, and if they wanted to catch a thief, then they may as well hire a thief. I worked for them for eight years, and then I got a call from the AMA."

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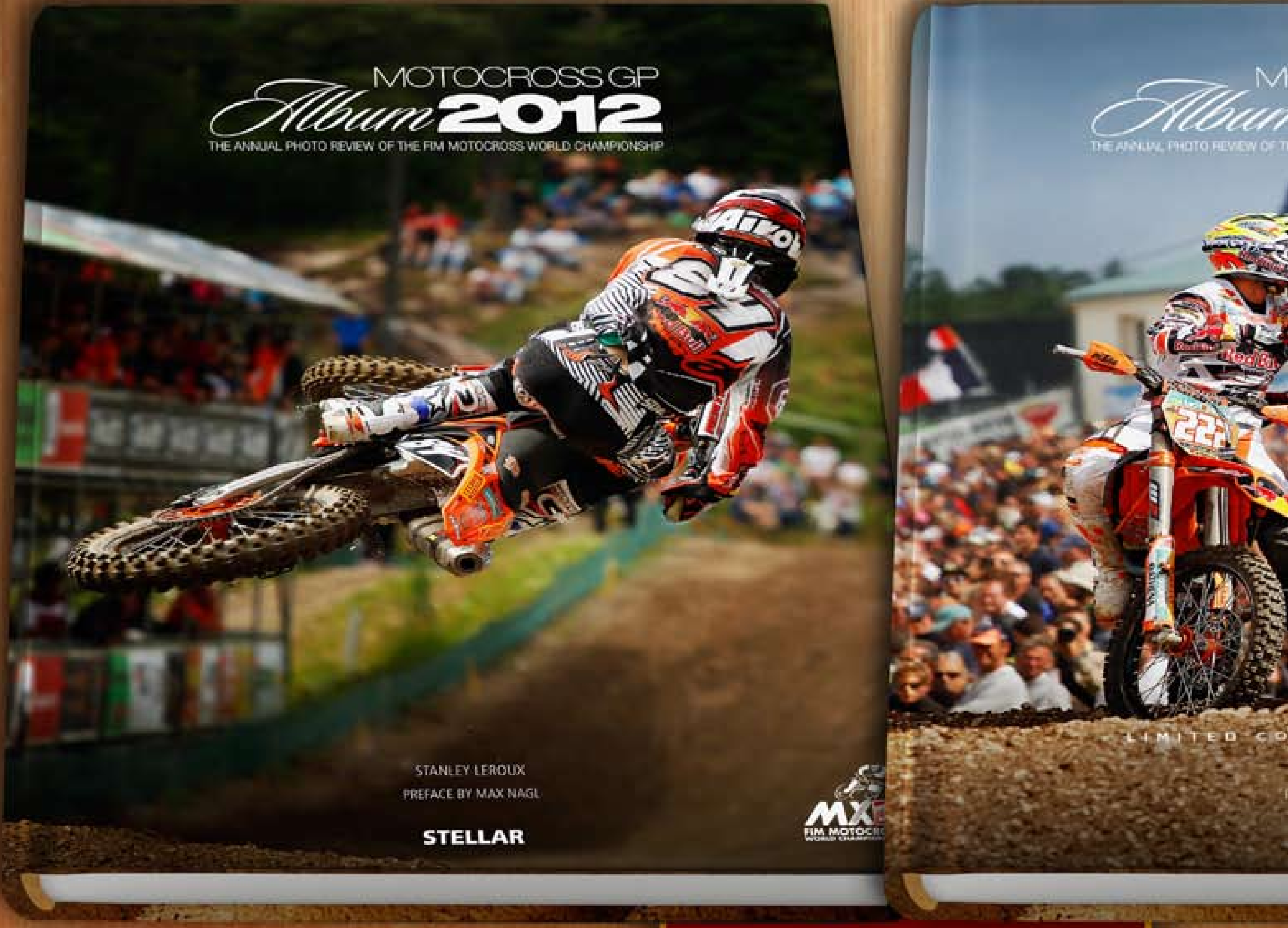
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DÉJÀ-VU

Tony Cairoli takes his third MX1 World Championship title on the KTM 350 SX-F still with races in hand. And after Marvin Musquin (2010) and Ken Roczen (2011), Jeffrey Herlings, riding the KTM 250 SX-F has ensured that the Red Bull KTM Factory Racing Team remains unbeaten in both classes for the last three years – WORLD CLASS!

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